

# Parental and peer influence on aggressive behaviour of selected higher secondary students

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## ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a development stage in human life which begins with puberty, the period where sexual maturity occurs and attains emotional, social and other aspects of adult maturity (Kale, 2008). Adolescents are inadequate in life skills such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, communication, anger management. Therefore, it can be said that adolescents are often faced with various developmental problems during this period and these problems may lead to aggression as they have no alternative behaviours. The term “aggression” refers to a range of behaviours that can result in both physical and psychological harm to oneself, other or objects in the environment. The expression of aggression can occur in a number of ways, including verbally, mentally and physically (Cherry, 2009). There are also views that suggest aggression to be formed from the interaction of individual characteristics like low self-esteem, peer rejection and academic failure and environmental characteristics like poverty; limited social support. Aggressive behaviour is slowly gaining prevalence among adolescents. So, the investigator has undertaken the study on “Parental and peer influence on aggressive behaviour of selected higher secondary students” with 50 boys and 50 girls by using a formulated questionnaire to analyze the factors that lead to aggression among learners in Secondary Schools

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a difficult period in one's life and youth struggle during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Darling, 2005). Physical and emotional changes occur at a rapid pace and the need for acceptance gains importance in a teenager's life. Hormones take over, emotions run high and every teen has to learn to cope with the new changes. They are also learning to get along with others and discovering their own self-awareness. Learning to adapt to these changes can create anger and sometimes even aggression in some teenagers (Schafer, 2013).

Aggression can be defined as any behaviour that causes painful experience to another person (Gendreau and Archer, 2005) or as actions that are destructive to one's self, other people or belongings (Connor *et al.*, 2006). Aggression is one of the most common and destructive behaviours that adolescents face today. Aggression can take a variety of forms and can be physical or be communicated verbally or non-verbally. Aggression differs from what is commonly called assertiveness, although the terms are often used interchangeably among lay people (Akert *et al.*, 2010).

Aggressive behaviour increases significantly during mid-adolescence, peaks in late adolescence and decreases

rapidly beginning in early adulthood. Many individuals in a population show transient aggressive behaviour during adolescence (Farrington, 2007), and there are only a minority (about 10%) of a population who do not engage in delinquent behaviour at all during adolescence (Piquero *et al.*, 2005).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Today, the view that aggression occurs as a combination of individual and environmental characteristics is widely accepted. Aggressive behaviour is slowly gaining prevalence among adolescents. So it is evitable to assess the aggressive behaviour of adolescents.

So the study on "Parental and peer influence on aggressive behaviour of selected higher secondary students" was undertaken with a sample of 50 adolescent boys and 50 girls by using a formulated questionnaire to analyze factors that lead to aggression among learners in Secondary School.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

There are different "risk factors" that increase the likelihood that a teen will engage in aggressive behaviour. Adolescents are often subjected to aggression at home and community outside the school.

### Impact of parental relationship:

Family environment has been suggested to be extremely important in shaping children's behaviour and attitudes. In particular, the quality of relationship between

child and parent, together with parenting skills, are central areas of importance. The following table expresses the impact of parental relationship in Table 1.

All the girls opined that their parents were non-supportive. Majority of the selected girls stated that they were scolded (92%) by their parents for no reason and stopped from doing interesting things. Eighty two per cent had experienced parental conflicts and 72 per cent felt that their parents were uninterested to their feelings. Nearly half of the girls had underwent punishment (56%) and followed by the parents encouragement to fight with other children (46%). Thirty four per cent of the selected girls were allowed to do whatever they want by their parents. Very few expressed that their fathers drink excessively (20%), parents spend less time with them (16%) and poor background stopped them from achieving success.

Majority of selected boys (80%) expressed that the parents did not allow them to do their favourite activities and spend less time with them (70%). Sixty per cent of the selected boys were being scolded without reason and punished by their parents; sixty per cent of the selected boys were given freedom to do whatever they want. It is depressing to note that sixty per cent of the selected boys were stopped from achieving success because of their poor background. Half of the selected boys had experienced parental conflicts and felt that their parents were uninterested to their feelings. Half of the selected boys expressed that their parents got upset when fail at school. Very few expressed that their parents were non supportive and their father drunk excessively.

Statement*	Girls	Boys
	(n=50 %)	(n=50 %)
Parents are non -supportive	100	40
Parents often fight with each other	82	50
Stop you from doing interesting things	90	80
Get upset when fail at school	64	50
Uninterested to your feelings	70	50
Scold you for no apparent reason	92	60
Discourage any form of aggression	36	50
Parents spend little time for you	16	70
Father drinks excessively	20	20
Poor background stops you from achieving success	8	60
Parents allow to do whatever you want	34	60
Punish you whenever you misbehave	56	60
Parent encourage you to fight with other children	46	-

\*Multiple responses

### Disciplinary techniques :

Disciplinary techniques play an important role in enhancing aggression among adolescents. Different types of disciplinary techniques are followed by parents of respondents are shown in Table 2.

Statement	Girls	Boys
	n=50 %	n=50 %
Democratic	72	40
Authoritarian	10	40
Permissive	18	20

From the above table, it was evident that majority of the girls had democratic parenting and followed by permissive (18%) and authoritarian (10%) techniques.

Forty per cent of selected boys had democratic and authoritarian parenting and very few of them had permissive (20%) technique.

### Parental attitudes

Studies found that domestic violence affects the children emotionally, socially, physically and behaviourally. Inadequate child rearing practices, disruptions in the family, antisocial parents, child abuse and aggressive interactions between siblings are regarded as risk factors associated with adolescent aggression in secondary school (McAdams and Lambie, 2003). Parental attitudes towards respondents are presented in Table 3.

Majority of girls (80%) stated that their parents scolded them because of their behaviour and sometimes

Statement*	Girls	Boys
	n=50 %	n=50 %
Non-responsive to your feelings and needs	20	40
Discourage you to talk about your feelings and problems	46	70
Not providing comfort and understanding when you feel upset	44	50
Very strict for you	18	40
Not permitting you for outing with friends	56	70
Scold when disapproved of your behaviour	84	60
Explode in anger towards you	82	60
Ignore your bad behaviour	8	50
Never conscious about your health	-	10
Provide everything whatever you want	62	90

\*Multiple responses

blasted in anger (82%) at them. Sixty two per cent of girls were afforded everything by their parents. More than half of the selected girls (56%) did not get permission for outing. Nearly half of the selected girls (46%) stated that their parents discourage them to talk about their feelings and problems and did not support (44%) when they were upset. Very few of them had irresponsible (20%) and strict parents (18%).

Most of (90%) the selected boys were afforded everything by their parents. Nearly three fourth of them (70%) stated that their parents never listened to their feelings and problems and were not permitted to go out. Sixty per cent of the selected boys were being scolded and blasted because of their behaviour. Half of them lacked support and were being ignored by their parents. Forty per cent of them had irresponsible and strict parents. It is shocked to note that boy's parents were being never conscious about their wards health (10%).

### Peer interaction :

The peer culture is perceived to be in conflict with that of adults. Secondary school learners typically turn to their peers for guidance in matters of dress, identity, social attitudes and "acceptable" behaviour.

### Problems of making and maintaining friends :

The problems in making and maintaining friends which were faced by respondents are shown in Table 4.

Statement*	Girls	Boys
	n=31 %	n=40 %
Not interest	71	63
Lack of communication	61	50
People afraid of making friends with you	32	25
Friends don't like you	16	25
Don't want to mingling with others	32	50

\*Multiple responses

Nearly one third of (62%) the selected girls had problem of making and maintaining friends such as not interested to make friends (71%), lack of communication (61%), afraid of being friends (32%), do not like to mingle with others(32%) and friends do not like them (16%).

Most of (80%) the selected boys had problem of making and maintaining friends, because they were not interested to make friends (63%), lack of communication (50%), do not like to mingle with others (50%), afraid of

becoming friends (25%) and not liked by their friends (25%).

### Reasons for restrain relations with friends :

The reasons for restrain relations with friends is shown Table 5.

Statement*	Girls	Boys
	n=16 %	n=37 %
Friends don't like your behaviour	25	54
You are boring	25	54
You are quite	25	57
You have short temper	75	70
Cannot get time to spent with them	25	54
Financial status	25	41

\*Multiple responses

Nearly one third of the selected girls had no good relationship with their friends mainly because of their short temper (75%), behaviour (25%), boring (25%) and quite personality (25%), financial status (25%) and lack of time to spend with friends (25%).

Nearly three fourth of the selected boys had no good relationship with their friends mainly because of their short temper (70%), quite personality (57%) and boring personality (54%), lack of time to spend with friends (54%) and financial status (41%).

### Peer influence :

Peer influence towards inducing aggression among respondents are shown in Table 6.

Statement*	Girls	Boys
	n=50 %	n=50 %
Friends encourage to fight with others	16	70
Friends encourage you to do bad things	-	20
Friends often ignore you	-	50
Friends often ridicule you	18	30

\*Multiple responses

From the above table it was evident that a few of (18%) the selected girls stated that their friends ridicule them and encourage them to fight with others (16%).

Three fourth of (70%) the selected boys stated that their friends liked to fight with others. Half of the selected boys were ignored by their friends. Nearly one third of them were ridiculed by their friends and 20 per cent of them were encouraged by their friends to do bad activities.

### Conclusion :

There is a need to recognize the prevalence of aggression among adolescents. The impression that only males perpetrate aggression is outdated. There is an upsurge of female aggression and it needs to be addressed urgently. This is typical of children who are exposed to aggressive media, an aggressive environment and most of all, a violent family setup. Neglect of children at home and at school makes them vulnerable to aggression as there is no prompt intervention to correct their behaviour. Peer groups fill that vacuum and children are influenced to live by the unethical codes prescribed by the group.

Parents and community are to be educated to cope with the aggressive behaviour of adolescents. The needs and problems of adolescents should be addressed with utmost care and concern. Home, school and community should take up their part and work hand in hand to develop a happy and healthy adolescent community

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