

**RESEARCH ARTICLE :**

## Social behaviour in childhood

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**SUMMARY :** The present study was conducted with the aim to study the social behaviour of school going children. The total samples of 160 children (84 boys and 76 girls) ranging in age from 6 to 8 years were selected through random sampling technique. From Hisar city, two schools affiliated to CBSE and two schools affiliated to HBSE were selected at random. From each school 40 children were randomly selected. Social behaviour of selected children was assessed with the help of social behaviour inventory by Punia (2002). Class teachers of selected children were requested to assess social behaviour of children in the classroom situations. These aspects of social behaviour included aggressiveness, emotionality and impulsiveness. Findings showed that there were significant differences for aggressive behaviour of boys and girls. Boys were more aggressive as compared to girls. Children from HBSE affiliated schools were more impulsive as compared to children from CBSE affiliated schools.

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**KEY WORDS :**

Social behaviour,  
Aggressiveness,  
Emotionality,  
Impulsiveness, Peer

### **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

When children begin formal schooling they must negotiate more rigorous academic demands that necessitate flexible thinking and systematic method of learning as well as higher level of self regulation. They must comply with teachers and learn to independently initiate and maintain relationship with peers. Behaviourally and emotionally, the initial years of schooling are paramount, as children's aggression, anxiety, self regulatory behaviours and social skills set the stage for interactions with peers and teachers and contribute to children's sense of competence and well being (Huston and Ripke, 2006). For children who solve their interpersonal dilemmas successfully and effectively, the social world is always reinforcing. But for

children who are lacking in interpersonal competence, there may be a considerable developmental risk. Research findings suggest that social failure may bring with it development of negative self perceptions of competence. It may also result in a maladaptive generalised social response such as aggression or withdrawal. If children use socially unacceptable means to achieve their goals, they may become rejected by their peers and adults. They are, thus, unlikely to form supportive social relationships. From social negotiation, discussion, and conflict, children learn to understand others' thoughts, emotions, motives and intentions. Children also then learn to think about the consequences of their behaviours for both themselves and for others and thus engage in appropriate and

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effective social behaviour. Development of competent social behaviour is very important for normal growth and development. Research indicates that unless children achieve minimum interpersonal competence, they have a high probability of being at risk throughout their life. Peer relationships contribute a great deal to both social and cognitive development and to the effectiveness with which we function as adults. The best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not IQ, school grades, or classroom behavior but, rather the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children.

Peers have great impact on children's behaviour because peers can alter behaviour of the child by their acceptance and rejection. Peer relationship plays a significant role in the social development of the children. Peer relationship has qualities that do not exist in adult-child relationship. The relations between similar age children are "symmetrical" in nature and involve the acquisition of skills needed for "give and take" to have successful peer interactions. The development of these skills promotes social competence. Now-a-day's peer relationship has gained great importance due to the societal changes. Children in modern society are experiencing social interaction with peers at a younger age and for longer period of times as more mothers of preschool age children join the work force and greater numbers of young children are cared for in group setting, very often with several other children of similar age and developmental levels.

Children who have difficulty or are unable to appropriately socialize with peers often experiences peer rejection, which places them at further risk for problems in the future. It was found that high risk behaviour predicted more serious outcomes as violence, substance abuse, unwanted teen pregnancy, depression and some forms of psychopathology. These high-risk behaviours include physical and verbal aggression, inability to wait and cope with frustration, lack of empathy, social withdrawal and poor peer relationships (Parker and Asher, 1987). The risks of social incompetence are many, such as, poor mental health, dropping out of school, low achievement and other school difficulties, poor employment history, and so forth (Katz and McClellan, 1991). Mental health and educational professionals generally agree that it is essential to begin developing prosocial attitudes and behaviors in children at a very young age because aggression in young children that is not remedied nearly always leads to later acts of

delinquency. Sheran (1999) reported that higher rates of child-mother interactions resulted in better child language, social competencies and social skills of the children. In another study, Seifer *et al.* (2004) reported that the unique relationship between the mother and the child importantly affects the way the mother perceives her child's behaviour. Ladd (2006) reported predictive relations among children's aggressive or withdrawn behaviours, peer rejection and psychological maladjustment across the 5-12 age groups. He reported that children's behaviour and their exposure to peer group rejection are determinants of psychological maladjustment. In the light of above discussion, the main objective of this paper is to study social behaviour of children during childhood.

## **RESOURCES AND METHODS**

The present study was conducted purposively in Hisar city. From Hisar, on the basis of information provided by education department, two schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and two schools affiliated to Haryana Board of Secondary Education (HBSE) were selected at random. From each school 40 children were randomly selected. Thus, a total of 160 children were selected from four schools irrespective of sex. Of these 160 children, 84 were boys and 76 were girls. Social behaviour inventory developed by Punia (2002) was used to assess the overt classroom behavior of children. Inventory consisted of 15 behavioral items on a likert type scale. For each behavior item, the teacher was requested to give a score of 1 through 5.

The teachers were requested to observe the behaviour of children for a period of one week before filling in the inventory. The classroom teacher was asked to think of the average 6-8 years old child. For each behaviour item, the teacher was requested to give a score of 1 through 5, total scores were calculated for aggressive, emotional and impulsive behaviour. Higher scores indicated more aggressive, highly emotional and impulsive behaviour.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS**

The results obtained from the present study as well as discussions have been summarized under following heads:

### Assessment of social behaviour of children :

Class teachers of selected children were requested to assess social behaviour of children in the classroom situations. These aspects of social behaviour included aggressiveness, emotionality and impulsiveness. Social behaviour of children was compared on the basis of sex of child and educational board. Sex and educational board-wise, means and standard deviations for the aggressive, emotional and impulsive behaviour of the children are presented in Table 1 and 2, respectively.

### Gender-wise comparison of social behaviour :

For comparison of social behaviour, class room social behaviour of boys and girls was compared using 'Z'-test. Sex of the child was taken as independent variable and aspects of social behaviour as dependent variable.

It is evident from Table 1 that there were no significant differences in emotionality and impulsive behaviour of boys and girls. Significant differences were obtained for aggressive behaviour,  $Z = 2.28^*$ ,  $p < .05$ . Boys were more aggressive ( $\bar{X} = 11.63$ ) as compared to girls ( $\bar{X} = 10.25$ ). Although not significantly different, girls were more emotional ( $\bar{X} = 13.29$ ) and less impulsive ( $\bar{X} = 10.76$ ) as compared to boys ( $\bar{X} = 12.67$  and  $11.77$ , respectively).

It can be interpreted from these results that boys exhibit more aggressive behaviour as compared to girls.

### Educational board-wise comparison of social behaviour :

Aggressive, emotional and impulsive behaviour of

children from CBSE and HBSE affiliated schools were also compared using 'Z' -test.

Non significant differences were found for aggressive,  $Z = 1.31$ ,  $p > .05$  and emotionality,  $Z = 1.60$ ,  $p > .05$ . Significant differences were obtained for impulsive behaviour,  $Z = 4.6^*$ ,  $p < .05$ .

As presented in Table 2 children from HBSE affiliated schools were more impulsive ( $\bar{X} = 12.45$ ) as compared to children from CBSE affiliated schools ( $\bar{X} = 10.14$ ). Hence it can be interpreted from the results that children from HBSE affiliated schools were more impulsive than those from CBSE affiliated schools.

Boys were more active than girls get support from previous literatures, Buss (1989) also indicated that boys were more active than girls and girls were more fearful than boys. Kohnstamm (1989) and Prior *et al.* (1989) also reported that boys were more active than girls. In another study, Prior *et al.* (2000) also reported that boys were more aggressive and hyperactive than girls. Hence, class teachers of selected children were requested to assess social behavior of children in the classroom situations. These aspects of social behavior included aggressiveness, emotionality and impulsiveness. Gender differences were examined in social behavior assessed by class teachers. Significant gender differences were obtained for aggressive behaviour. Boys were more aggressive as compared to girls. Results of the recent studies conducted by Anita (2010) and Shanwal (2010) also indicated that boys were more aggressive than girls. Earlier studies also indicate that boys tend to be more aggressive than girls (Rubin and Krasnor, 1983; Maccoby, 1980).

**Table 1 : Comparison of social behaviour of boys and girls**

Social behaviour	Boys (n=84)		Girls (n=76)		'Z'-values
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Aggressive	11.63	3.93	10.25	3.70	2.28 *
Emotionality	12.67	3.45	13.29	3.82	0.10
Impulsive	11.77	3.52	10.76	3.11	1.9

Note: \* Means differ significantly in the same row at 5% level.

**Table 2 : Comparison of social behaviour of children on the basis of educational board**

Social behaviour	Educational board				'Z'-values
	C.B.S.E. (n= 80)		HBSE (n=,80)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Aggressive	11.37	3.46	10.58	4.24	1.31
Emotionality	12.60	3.97	13.33	3.25	1.60
Impulsive	10.14	2.68	12.45	3.5	4.6*

Note: \* Means differ significantly in the same row at 5% level.

## Conclusion :

In the last, from the findings of the present study discussed in the light of literature, it can be concluded that boys were significantly more aggressive as compared to girls. Significant differences were obtained for impulsive behaviour on the basis of educational board. Children from HBSE affiliated schools were more impulsive as compared to children from CBSE affiliated schools.

Parents and other caregivers should be a good role model and encourage positive social skills, such as trading, negotiating, sharing, inviting others to play, asking before entering other play, offering help others, asking for help and sharing play ideas. They may choose from a wide variety of approaches that can be adapted to fit the situation and the needs of individual children. Teachers may organize special play sessions, group children who lack social skills with children who are socially competent. This provides the less skilled child with someone from whom he / she may learn effective skills. They may also provide on the spot guidance to facilitate communication patterns.

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