

DETERMINANTS OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, the deviance in the behaviour of adolescents has become a global issue and it requires immediate attention. On one hand, the vigor and the aptitude of the present generation were surprising the people in their mid-age and old age, however; on the other hand, the social tension is increasing day by day due to the offensive behaviours exhibited by adolescents. The deviant thought and behavior demonstrated by adolescents has an influence over their peer group which further declines their morality. The present study analyse the contributing factors towards the deviant behavior among the adolescents such as their socio-economic status, parenting style, peer pressure, addiction to social media, and an ineffective support system. The researcher would suggest professional methods to help adolescents to modify their undesirable behaviors that would help in reducing the intensity of the problem.

Keywords: *Deviant Behaviour, Adolescents, determinants of deviance*

Introduction

Adolescence

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. UN defines adolescents as individuals between the age of 10 and 19 years. They have been categorized as Early adolescents (10-14 years) and Late adolescents (15-19 years). According to UNICEF adolescents contribute 16% of the world's population that is roughly around 1.2 billion adolescents. More than half of all adolescents globally live in Asia. In absolute numbers, South Asia is home to more adolescents – around 340 million – than any other region. It is followed by East Asia and the Pacific with around 277 million.

Adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles. All societies recognize that

there is a difference between being a child and becoming an adult. How this transition from childhood to adulthood is defined and recognized differs between cultures and over time.

Adolescence is one of the speediest phases of human lifespan. Physical growth would be dominant than the psychosocial maturity. The characteristics of both the individual and the environment influence the changes taking place during adolescence. Younger adolescents may be particularly vulnerable when their capacities are still developing and they are beginning to move outside the confines of their families.

Early Adolescence (10-14 years) is the stage that physical changes generally commence, usually beginning with a growth spurt and soon followed by development of the sex organs and secondary sexual characteristics. These external changes are often very obvious and can be a source of anxiety as well as excitement or pride. The internal changes in the individual, although less evident, are equally profound. In these early adolescent years brain undergoes a spectacular burst of electrical and physiological development. The number of brain cells can almost double in the course of year, while neural

networks are radically recognized, with a consequent impact on emotional, physical and mental ability. The frontal lobe, that governs reasoning and decision making, starts to develop during early adolescence. As this development starts later and takes longer in boys, their tendency to act impulsively and to be uncritical in their thinking lasts longer than in girls.

It is during early adolescence that boys and girls become more keenly aware of their gender and they make adjustments to their behavior or appearance in order to fit with perceived norms. They may fall victim to or participate in bullying and they may also feel confused about their own personal and sexual identity.

Late adolescence (15-19 years) encompasses the later part of teenage years where, the major physical changes have usually occurred by now, although the body is still developing. The brain continues to develop and recognize itself, and the capacity for analytical and reflective thought is greatly enhanced. Peer-group opinions still tend to be important at the outset, but their hold diminishes as adolescents gain more clarity and confidence in their own identity and options.

Risk-taking a common feature of adolescence where the adolescents experimenting the “adult behaviours”, declines during late adolescents, as the ability to evaluate risk and make conscious decisions develops. But still some of the experimental behaviours would continue during the late adolescence.

It is during the period of adolescence, the individuals experiment with deviant behaviours, especially in the school environment and has the higher risk of accommodating those risky behaviours into their personality.

Deviant behaviour can be defined as non-compliance to the norms and regulations of the society, culture, organization, institution and legislation. The origin of deviant behaviour could be traced along with the origin of human race. Deviant behaviour is seen among people right from the beginning of the existence of human beings. Though it is an inevitable problem of global society, research studies indicate that the density and intensity of deviance in human behaviour has been alarmingly increased and is creating a massive disruption in the balance of the society. Deviant thoughts and behaviours of people is the epicentre of majority of

contemporary social problems. The adolescents, though they have the potential to influence the social and economic development of the country, the offensive behaviour committed by the adolescents is in increasing pace that threatens the peaceful functioning of the society. Deviant behavior among adolescents has been alarmingly increasing every year. Especially the social situation raised by the pandemic, the lockdown procedures, and a complete transfer in the mode of education, has made the psychological atmosphere still more complex among the adolescents, which is too fragile for their parents, teachers or mentors to handle.

The department of justice, US have reported that people in the age group of 17 – 24 are the major contributors toward crime in the nation.

The Cabinet Office of Japan has made a survey on Juvenile delinquency and have reported that juveniles conflict with law has increased to a greater extent in last five years.

The NCRB report 2020 has stated that, a majority (75.5%) of juveniles in conflict with law apprehended under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Special Local Law (SLL) crimes were in the age group of 16-18 years. The report further shows that the rate of crime by juveniles was 6.7.

The number of murder cases in which juveniles were named as accused has more than doubled in the five years from 2016 to 2020 in Tamil Nadu. It has also been reported that 104 of the 1,661 murders (6.3%) in 2020 involves juvenile offenders. This illustrates how serious the phenomenon is and necessary steps have to be taken instantly.

The miserable situation existing in our country is that, a deviant behaviour is recorded only when it has well transformed into a crime. There is a dearth of evidence on adolescent's deviant behaviour in its initial stage which is essential to curb further deterioration. Therefore, the researcher would like to explore the normative deviance among the school going adolescents and to further analyse the contributing factors that would help in reducing the intensity of the problem.

Determinants of Deviant Behaviour

The majority of the deviant behaviors among the adolescents has its beginning in the school environment and seems to be continuing

thereafter. There could be numerous reasons for adolescents to involve in deviant behavior such as their socio-economic background, parenting style adapted by the parents, peer influence, ineffective social support system and the influence of social media.

Family Circumstances

Family plays a pivotal role in the life of adolescents or for anyone for that matter. Family situation like dynamics of interaction and relationship that exist among the members would act as an influencing factor in the behavior of the children and adolescents raised in the family. If the family situation is not good such as continuous arguments, lack of support among family members, ego centric interactions, lack of time to spent upon family members, towards children especially would create an impact in the mind of the adolescents in the family. As their trust upon family members gets faded more the risk for the adolescents to become deviant as the children inclusive of adolescents pick majority of their behavioural characteristics from their immediate family members. **Angelo Reyes Dullas, et.al, (2021)** made a study on Determinants of a Variety of Deviant Behaviors among Filipino Adolescents. His study was designed to look for the possible predictors of deviant behavior, as well as its association with family satisfaction and personality trait and it was found that, there was a negative/inverse association between family satisfaction and deviant behavior. This implies that respondents who participate more in deviant behaviors are found to be less satisfied with their family life, while respondents who participate less in deviant behavior are more satisfied in their family life. Hence it was evident that family circumstances is an important determinant that has an influence on the behavior of the adolescents.

Socio-economic Context:

The socio-economic condition in which the person grows and lives has an impact on their behaviour. If the adolescents happen to live with poor economic condition and has to face financial crisis to fulfill their needs, it would act as a triggering factor to involve in deviant activities for the sake of remuneration. **Omorogiwa Tracy and Osamede Kingsley Omorogiwa (2017)** conducted a

study focusing on adolescent deviant behaviour in relation to the socio-economic influences at Benin Metropolis and found that socio-economic contexts, parental income, peer group influence, adolescents' gender and age are linked to adolescents' attitude toward deviant behavior. It was also revealed in **Angelo Reyes Dullas's** study (2021) that gender plays a significant role in determining deviant behavior or the extent to which they involve in deviant acts. His study shows that female participants have higher tendency to engage in minor infractions of deviant acts, while males had a higher rate of participation in severe infractions of deviant acts.

Parental Involvement:

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping the behavior of their children in general and they model the behaviours to their children. When parents show genuine interest in the development of their adolescent children it would curb the majority of the problems to a large extent. If the parents neglect the needs of their children especially their emotional needs it would compel the children who is already confused due to teen crisis, to depend on other sources, and the other sources has not been positive always. **Gabriel Merrin et.al, (2018)** in his study stated that individuals who reported lower levels of parental monitoring and higher levels of peer deviance reported the highest levels of deviant and violent behaviors, and adolescents who reported higher levels of parental monitoring and higher levels of peer deviance reported less positive growth.

Peer Pressure:

Peers are hero's in the world of adolescents. A famous proverb says 'Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are'. Proverbs do not make sense in the field of scientific research, but this one is proven though. **Milliward J. Nkhata and Marisen Mwale (2016)** made an investigation of the Contributing Factors to Adolescent Deviant Behaviours in the Central region of Malawi in Dowa district. It was established in their study that adolescents were involved in deviant acts for the sake of conformity because they see their friends doing the same. Adolescents behave antisocially to be accepted and for association. At school

adolescents get affected in one way or the other as they are socialised either positively or negatively by their fellow students and teachers. Most of the adolescents who involve in deviant behaviours due to peer pressure consider that as a stylish act not really knowing about the intensity of its consequences.

Social Media:

Social media has become inevitable in almost everyone's life irrespective of the age. Adolescents whose nature is being curious and distracted, get easily lost in the colours of social media. **Muhammed and Mohamedunni Alias Musthafa (2015)** conducted a study on media influence on deviant behaviour of adolescents at Kerala state and found that Violence, Social intolerance, Glamour and power and Glamorizing and disrespect for women were the recurring deviant thematic content and factors like Family environment, Socio-economic environment, Race and gender and Locus of control were vulnerable to deviant behavior. COVID'19 pandemic had its impact on every part of the world and has affected every field and every sector and the field of education is no exception. Children were provided with mobile phones to enhance their online mode of education, which lately was understood that, it doesn't help the learning behavior rather made the adolescents spent excessive time on internet and social media. Social media as we know could be viewed as equivalent to knife which has to handled carefully and the needed maturity is what lacking in adolescents who was easily carried away by its glamour.

Conclusion:

This study has analyzed and assumes with the help of earlier empirical studies that deviant behavior among adolescents was determined by factors such as family circumstances, socio-economic context, parental involvement, peer pressure, and social media. These factors play a vital role in influencing deviant behavior among adolescents. It requires immediate action with the collective effort of parents, teachers, community and the Government to curb the problems. Regular check on the whereabouts of the adolescents be it technical or non-technical is required. Mentoring system would be beneficial to address the issues by understand adolescents,

and be more empathetic rather than exercising control over their behaviours.

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