



## Impact of School Environment on Aggressive Behaviour of Adolescents

### KEYWORDS

Aggression, School Environment and adolescents

**Vandana Kumari**

Assistant Professor, Home Science Department Govt Girls  
PG College, Ghazipur, UP

**Dr. Tejpreet K Kang**

Professor cum Head Department of Human  
Development College of Home Science PAU, Ludhiana

**Dr. Princy**

Research Fellow, Department of Human Development, College of Home Science PAU, Ludhiana

**ABSTRACT** *The present study entitled "impact of school environment on aggressive behaviour of adolescents" was under taken in the Ludhiana district of Punjab State. The study was designed to assess and compare the impact of school environment on aggressive behavior of adolescent boys and girls. The sample comprised of 400 adolescents (200 boys and 200 girls) in the age group of 13-17 years. Results revealed that adolescent boys were more assaultive, negative and verbally aggressive than adolescent girls, while girls were more suspicious than boys. Correlation analysis of adolescents' aggression with school environment showed that assaultive behavior is positively related to rejection at school, while negatively related to acceptance. Expression of indirect aggression is negatively related to creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement and control. Results showed that irritability and negative feelings of adolescents are not affected by school environment. Resentment showed positive association with rejection. That is why classroom environment is an influential factor for the development of adolescent aggression.*

Aggression is a form of behavior characterized by physical or verbal attack. It may be directed outward against others or inward against the self, leading to self destructive or suicidal actions. Kakar (1974) defines aggression as an attempt by an individual or group to inflict physical injury on another individual or group without the consideration of whether their attempt was intentional or whether it was successful. Berkowitz (1993) defined aggression as any form of behavior that is intended to injure someone physically or psychologically. The dictionary meaning of aggression is hostile or violent behavior or attitudes. It is disorganized emotional response. Operationally aggression may be defined in terms of frequent quarreling, impulses of taking revenge and reactionary attitudes to traditions and beliefs. It is considered as a learned behavior or as an act against frustration which is affected by various biological and environmental factors.

Aggressive behavior is any demanding or intrusive behavior that has an adverse effect on others (e.g., name calling, taunting, or verbal threats). It can be direct (yelling, destroying personal property, insulting) or indirect (gossiping, ignoring, spreading false rumours). It may be driven by emotional arousal often some form of frustration, or it may be instrumental when it is used to secure a reward. Aggression in some cases assume a relatively positive and socially approved form if it is manifested by ambition, hard work to prove a point or a vigorous competitive spirit. It is of course, true that during the course of life time every individual suffers many frustrations and correspondingly it can be expected that everyone expresses aggression from time to time. So, frustration and its consequences may be seen as normal aspects of the developmental process. They become really serious when they assume too great a magnitude. Aggression gets out of control when an individual begins to display it in an increasingly broad range of situations with increasing frequency. Aggression also become serious when an individual develops it as a pattern and refuses to consider more culturally means to attain goal.

We must accept that aggressive behavior does not develop at the age of 16 or 17 years. It is a part of long developmental process that begins during the childhood. Many children mature in an atmosphere of violent relationships between men and women-husbands battering wives, women assaulted by boyfriends and other males or they themselves being at the receiving end of physical punishment. These children come to adopt the same attitudes and practices in dealing with peers and, eventually, their own families as their elders did. Aggression doesn't develop overnight, and is largely homebred. Experts ascribe aggression to a combination of factors- increasing exposure to violence through the media and the internet, lack of parental supervision, persistence tension and use of foul language at home, lack of communication between child and parents, faulty parenting, performance pressure at school, growing substance abuse, increasing intake of junk food and sedentary life style (Broota 2008). During the formative years, that are two to 10 years of age, children are very inquisitive. They want to use every new world they come across, want to imitate their role model and want to feel big. At this age, if parents are not there to answer their queries, chances of their falling prey to behavior problems are high.

Adolescent accounts for one fifth of the world's population and have been on an increasing trend. In India they account for 253.2 million in 2011 (Census 2011). This implies that about 230 million Indias are adolescents in the age group of 10 to 19 years. World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as a period of life between 10-20 years of age. The term adolescent means "to emerge" or "achieve identity". Adolescence is defined as phase of life characterized by rapid physical growth and development, physical, social and psychological changes and maturity, sexual maturity, experimentation, development of adult mental processes and a move from the earlier childhood socio-economic dependence to relative independence.

Adolescents who are at risk for problems with school authorities are more likely to display conduct difficulties such as oppositional or aggressive behavior. Consequently these youths are more likely to have affiliations with antisocial peers, and thus, reduced commitment to educational achievement. Interestingly, there is no difference between male and female adolescents, because of the developmental processes were the same when early conduct difficulties developed. A large number of children are victims of unfair selection and it is natural for a victimized child to feel hurt and angry (Veeraraghavan 2006). Thus teacher biasness and criticism, friends rejection contributes to the persistence of aggressive behavior in children. Empirical investigations examining the teacher student relationship as a context of childrens development have documented findings suggesting a positive teacher student relationship can function as a protective factor that buffers children from the effects of known risk factors (Denham et al 1997, Fallu and Janosz 2001). Childhood aggression is a risk factor of particular interest because children exhibiting aggressive behavior are vulnerable to significant later maladjustment, including academic failure, substance abuse and delinquency (Loeber 1990).

Adolescence is considered as the most important transition period of life, as adolescents face an intense turmoil because of the cognitive, biological and social changes taking place in this period. This is also the period of psychological transition from a child who has to live in a family to an adult who has to live in a society. Furthermore, adolescence is a period of heightened risk with high rates of conduct disorders and antisocial behavior. In adolescence stage any of the thwarting of desires, interruption in activities, constant fault finding, teasing, lecturing and making unfavorable comparisons with other children will lead to aggression (Veeraraghavan 2006). Keeping above description in mind, the present study was undertaken to study the aggression among adolescents.

#### Objectives:

- To study the level of aggression among adolescent boys and girls.
- To assess the school environment of adolescent boys and girls.
- To study the impact of school environment on aggressive behavior of adolescent boys and girls.

#### METHODOLOGY

**Locale of the Study:** The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab State. List of all high schools and senior secondary schools in Ludhiana district was procured from the District Education Officer, Ludhiana. From this list, four rural and four urban schools were randomly selected through lottery method.

**Sample:** The sample comprised of 400 adolescents (200 boys and 200 girls) in the age group of 13-17 years from rural and urban areas of Ludhiana.

**Selection of sample:** Only those students were retained in the sample who were school going and were from nuclear and intact Punjabi origin families.

A list of all the high schools and senior secondary schools in Ludhiana district was procured from the District Education Officer, Ludhiana. From the list, four rural and four urban schools were randomly selected through lottery method. Then list of students was procured from principals of the selected schools. Those adolescents were purposively

selected to constitute the sample who were from Punjabi origin, nuclear and intact families. Before administering tests, they were made clear about the purpose of collecting the data and were told that the information provided by them would be kept strictly confidential and they can respond to the test items without hesitation.

#### Instruments used:

##### Buss-Durkee Aggression Scale

Buss-Durkee Aggression Scale was used for the assessment of aggressive behavior of respondents. It is a self report type of test which measures general aggression as well as various forms of aggression, such as assault, indirect aggression, irritability, negativism, resentment, suspicion, verbal aggression and guilt. The Hindi adaptation was done by Sultania (2006). This scale was translated into Punjabi language for the convenience of the respondents. The scale consists of 67 items which measure eight forms of aggression like assault, indirect aggression, irritability, negativism, resentment, suspicious, verbal aggression and guilt.

##### School Environmental Inventory

School Environmental Inventory by Mishra (2002) was used to measure psycho-social climate of school as perceived by pupils. It provides a measure of the quantity and quality of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the students during their school life in terms of teacher pupil interaction. It contains 70 items related to six dimensions of school environment- creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, permissiveness, acceptance, rejection and control.

#### Results and Discussion

Table 1 portrays difference in mean scores of different dimension of aggression among boys and girls. The pervasive gender difference was found in the dimension of assault (5.30 and 4.90 respectively), negativism (2.53 and 2.34 respectively) and expression of verbal aggressive (4.48 and 4.23 respectively) while girls (5.54) were more suspicious than boys (5.23). The result is consistent with findings of Jacklin (1974) who reported that males are generally more physically aggressive than females.

Table 2 shows percent distribution of adolescents across three levels of various dimensions of school environment.

**Creative stimulation:** Among boys, 59 per cent reported that they had medium level of creative stimulation in his schools while 17.5 per cent reported high level of creative stimulation. It indicated that teacher encouraged the students to develop new ideas and they use several different ways to made teaching interesting. In case of girls, the proportion of girls was more in medium level (75.5%) as compared to boy adolescents. This shows that conditions and opportunities for creative stimulation were more for girls than boys. Among adolescents 67.25 per cent were in medium level for creative stimulation.

**Cognitive encouragement:** Among boys 81 per cent reported medium level of cognitive encouragement while none of them was in high level. This indicated that teachers motivate students to work hard and but do not help in special studies of students. In case of girls, majority (96.51%) had medium level of cognitive encouragement. Among adolescents majority (88.75%) had medium level of cognitive encouragement.

**Permissiveness:** In the dimension of permissiveness among boys 72.5 per cent reported medium level while

21 per cent reported low level. This shows that teachers participate with students in different co-curricular activities. But they are not always ready to remove the difficulties of students. Among girls, 77 per cent reported medium level of permissiveness and 15 per cent high level of permissiveness. Among adolescents 74.75 per cent perceived medium level of permissiveness. This indicated that teachers take interest in the educational development of the students.

**Acceptance:** Among boys, 63.5 per cent reported medium level of acceptance while among girls, 77 per cent reported medium level of acceptance. It means that girls' views and opinions were more accepted in schools as compared to boys. Among adolescents 70.25 per cent had medium level of acceptance and 15.25 per cent had high level of acceptance.

**Rejection:** among boys 68 per cent reported medium level of rejection while 22.50 per cent reported high level of rejection. This shows that teachers do not pay attention to interest of students and they are not worried about future of students. In case of girls 65 per cent reported medium level of rejection. Among adolescents 66.5 per cent reported medium and 19 per cent reported high level of rejection.

**Control:** The perusal of table reveals that in case of girls (75%) control was more as compared to boys (64.5%). This indicated that schools put more rules and regulations on girls than boys. Among adolescents, 69.75 per cent perceived medium level of control.

**Total school environment:** Among boys 62.5 per cent perceived medium level of school environment and 16.5 per cent high level of school environment. In case of girls

proportion was more in medium level (82.5%) than boys. Among adolescents 72.5 per cent perceived medium level of school environment while 13.75 per cent reported high level of school environment.

Table 3 shows correlation analysis between adolescent's aggression and school environment. The results showed assaultive behavior is positively and significantly related to rejection at school ( $r=0.113, p<0.05$ ). while negatively and significantly related to acceptance ( $r=-0.106, p<0.05$ ). The result is consistent with the findings of Whitecomb (1997) who reported that adolescents who experienced social rejection at school were found to be more likely to engage in aggressive behavior. Expression of indirect aggression is negatively and significantly related to creative stimulation ( $r=-0.095, p<0.10$ ), cognitive encouragement ( $r=-0.131, p<0.01$ ) and control ( $r=-0.117, p<0.05$ ) of school. It indicated that students' involvement in co-curricular activities, teachers' appreciation and motivation promotes prosocial behavior among adolescents.

Results showed that irritability and negative feelings of adolescents are affected by school environment. Resentment showed positive and significant association with rejection ( $r=0.129, p<0.01$ ). that is why classroom environment is also an influential factor on the development of adolescent aggression. A positive and significant classroom environment seems to be a protective factor for development of aggression (Ystgaard 1997). Suspicion and guilt is not significantly related to school environment. Verbal aggression is negatively and significantly related to cognitive encouragement ( $r=-0.087, p<0.10$ ) and permissiveness ( $r=-0.101, p<0.05$ ). Total aggressive behavior of adolescents is negatively and significantly related to permissiveness ( $r=-0.112, p<0.05$ ) but positively and significantly related to rejection ( $r=0.115, p<0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Difference in mean scores of different dimensions of aggression among adolescent boys and girls.**

| Dimensions of Aggression | Gender |       | F Ration | SEM  | CD   |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|----------|------|------|
|                          | Boys   | Girls |          |      |      |
| Assault                  | 5.30   | 4.90  | 5.223**  | .101 | .280 |
| Indirect Aggression      | 4.39   | 4.20  | 1.899    | .097 | NS   |
| Irritability             | 4.09   | 4.20  | .586     | .097 | NS   |
| Negativism               | 2.53   | 2.34  | 2.765*   | .079 | .219 |
| Resentment               | 3.38   | 3.55  | 1.18     | .110 | NS   |
| Suspicion                | 5.23   | 5.54  | 3.766*   | .115 | .319 |
| Verbal aggression        | 4.48   | 4.23  | 4.082**  | .096 | .243 |
| Guilt                    | 6.01   | 6.19  | 2.117    | .087 | NS   |
| <b>TOTAL AGGRESSION</b>  | 35.39  | 35.21 | .107     | .389 | NS   |

\*Significant at 10% level of significance; \*\*Significant at 5% level of significance; \*\*\* Significant at 1% level of significance

**Table 2: Percent distribution of adolescents across three levels of various dimensions of school environment.**

| Dimensions of School Environment | Level  | Boys   |            | Girls  |            | Total  |            |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
|                                  |        | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Creative Stimulation             | Low    | 47     | 23.5       | 20     | 10         | 67     | 16.75      |
|                                  | Medium | 118    | 59         | 151    | 75.5       | 269    | 67.25      |
|                                  | High   | 35     | 17.5       | 29     | 14.5       | 64     | 16         |
| Cognitive Encouragement          | Low    | 38     | 19         | 5      | 2.5        | 43     | 10.75      |
|                                  | Medium | 162    | 81         | 193    | 96.5       | 355    | 88.75      |
|                                  | High   | 0      | 0          | 2      | 1          | 2      | 0.5        |
| Permissiveness                   | Low    | 42     | 21         | 16     | 8          | 58     | 14.5       |
|                                  | Medium | 145    | 72.5       | 154    | 77         | 299    | 74.75      |
|                                  | High   | 13     | 6.5        | 30     | 15         | 43     | 10.75      |
| Acceptance                       | Low    | 37     | 18.5       | 21     | 10.5       | 58     | 14.5       |
|                                  | Medium | 127    | 63.5       | 154    | 77         | 281    | 70.25      |
|                                  | High   | 36     | 18         | 25     | 12.5       | 61     | 15.25      |
| Rejection                        | Low    | 19     | 9.5        | 39     | 19.5       | 58     | 14.5       |
|                                  | Medium | 136    | 68         | 130    | 65         | 266    | 66.5       |
|                                  | High   | 45     | 22.5       | 31     | 15.5       | 76     | 19         |

|         |        |     |      |     |      |     |       |
|---------|--------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| Control | Low    | 39  | 19.5 | 18  | 9    | 57  | 14.25 |
|         | Medium | 129 | 64.5 | 150 | 75   | 279 | 69.75 |
|         | High   | 32  | 16   | 32  | 16   | 64  | 16    |
| Total   | Low    | 42  | 21   | 13  | 6.5  | 55  | 13.75 |
|         | Medium | 125 | 62.5 | 165 | 82.5 | 290 | 72.5  |
|         | High   | 33  | 16.5 | 22  | 11   | 55  | 13.75 |

**Table 3: Correlation analysis between adolescents aggression and school environment.**

| Dimensions of School Environment | Dimensions of Aggression |                     |              |            |            |           |             |        |          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|--------|----------|
|                                  | Assault                  | Indirect Aggression | Irritability | Negativism | Resentment | Suspicion | Verbal Aggr | Guilt  | Total    |
| A                                | 0.026                    | -0.078              | -0.024       | -0.041     | 0.059      | -0.047    | -0.064      | -0.021 | -0.045   |
| B                                | -0.020                   | -0.095*             | 0.009        | -0.029     | -0.040     | 0.009     | -0.087*     | 0.057  | -0.051   |
| C                                | -0.002                   | -0.131***           | -0.045       | -0.054     | -0.053     | -0.060    | -0.101**    | 0.011  | -0.112** |
| D                                | 0.106**                  | -0.013              | 0.008        | -0.028     | 0.046      | -0.043    | 0.046       | 0.037  | 0.041    |
| E                                | 0.113**                  | 0.025               | 0.080        | 0.020      | 0.129***   | 0.047     | 0.022       | -0.002 | 0.115**  |
| F                                | 0.079                    | -0.117**            | 0.002        | -0.068     | 0.031      | 0.024     | -0.034      | 0.007  | -0.014   |
| Total                            | 0.035                    | -0.097*             | -0.018       | -0.048     | 0.016      | -0.047    | -0.065      | 0.017  | -0.052   |

A: creative stimulation; B:Cognitive Encouragement; C: Permissiveness; D: Acceptance; E: Rejection; F: Control

\*Significant at 10% level of significance; \*\*Significant at 5% level of significance; \*\*\*Significant at 1 % level of significance

**Conclusion:** A close look at the findings revealed that adolescent boys were more assaultive, negative and verbally aggressive than adolescent girls, while girls were more suspicious than boys. Results revealed that permissiveness at school had negative and significant relation with aggression while rejection at school had positive and significant relation with aggressive behavior of adolescents. Correlation analysis of adolescent's aggression with school environment showed that assaultive behavior is positively related to rejection at school, while negatively related to acceptance. Expression of indirect aggression is negatively related to creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement and control. Results showed that irritability and negative feelings of adolescents are not affected by school environment. Resentment showed positive association with rejection. That is why classroom environment is also an influential factor for the development of adolescent aggression. A positive classroom environment seems to be a protective factor for development of aggression (Ystgaard 1997). Total aggressive behavior of adolescents is negatively related to permissiveness but positively related to rejection.

## References

- Berkowitz L (1993) *Aggression: Its causes, consequences and control*. Pp. 429-41.PA: Temple University Press. Philadelphia.
- Broota A (2008) Hot Cross Kids: A growing number of angry urban children are capable of violence Pp 22-26 (Original not seen cited by Sharma G) *The Week*, Jan, 2008.
- Denham S A and DeMulder E K (1997) Q-short assessment of child-teacher attachment relationships and social competence in the preschool. *Early Education and Development* 8:27-39.
- Dodge K A Coie J D and Price J M (1998) Peer status and aggression in boys groups: Developmental and contextual analyses. *Child Dev*: 61: 1289-1309.
- Kakar S (1974) *Colours of violence*. Oxford University press, New Delhi.
- Jacklin (1974) Male versus female aggression. Available online [www.handinhandparenting.org/es/Articles.htm](http://www.handinhandparenting.org/es/Articles.htm)
- Loeber R (1990) Development and risk factors of juvenile antisocial behavior and delinquency: *Clinical Psychology Review*. 10:1-42.
- Mishra K S (2002) *School Environment Inventory (SEI)* Ankur Psychological Agency, Lucknow, India.
- Sultania M K (2006) *Aggression Inventory*. National Psychological Corporation, Agra.
- Veeraraghavan V (2006) *Behaviour problems in children and adolescents*. Pp 66-76.
- Northern Book Centre, New Delhi.

14. Whitecomb J (1997) Causes of violence in children. *J Mental Health* 6: 433-42.

15. Ystgaard M (1997) Life stress, social support and psychological distress in late adolescents. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 32:277-283