



## EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF ADOLESCENTS ON PEER INFLUENCE

S. Shwetha Maria & Dr. S Anuradha

Department of Psychology, Christ University, Bangalore, Karnataka

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the present research was to explore the experience of adolescents on peer influence. Adolescence is a period of development they experience various biological and psychological changes. During adolescence, individuals are influenced by various factors in life and among these peers play a vital function. Peers influence adolescents both positively and negatively. The study employed interpretative phenomenological approach to understand the personal experiences of adolescents on peer influence. Purposive sampling method was used to collect the sample. The sample consisted of 4 adolescents in the age group of 13 to 16 years. Out of 4 adolescents 2 were male and 2 were female. The data was collected through in-depth interview with 20 open ended questions. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Results showed that peers played a role in the life of adolescents' in influencing them to use mobiles and face book, they have also influenced them in studies and motivated them to achieve and succeed in their life.

**Key words:** Adolescent's, Peer Influence, Experience of Adolescents.

### **Introduction**

Adolescence is a developmental period in everyone's life and it is a transitional stage that ranges from childhood to the adulthood where they experience various biological and psychological changes like the development of secondary sexual characteristics, etc. Though the physical, psychological and cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later the adolescence period generally corresponds to the teenage years. It is the time of discovery and disorientation.

Erik Erikson, a psychoanalyst formulated the psychosocial stages of human development that every individual has to go through from infancy to late adulthood and in each stage an individual confronts and masters new challenges. The stages have been divided into eight stages of psychosocial development. These stages are hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care and wisdom. In each stage an individual faces with psychosocial crisis and successful achievement of each stage lead to healthy and integrated personality. Failure in achievement of any stage leads to reduced ability to complete subsequent stages and leads to unhealthy personality and sense of self. Erickson development of stages is such that each stage depends upon the successful achievement of a previous stage by an individual and uncompleted stages seems to arrive as a threat for the healthy development of an individual. In eight stages of psychosocial development the fifth stage is corresponding to the adolescent phase. McLeod, (2008) put forth that Erickson has greatly lay emphasis on the adolescent phase; because he assume that it is a vital phase for developing an individual identity in the society. In this stage the adolescents are faced with the conflict of identity and role confusion in which they experience some identity crisis and mixed feelings about the ways to fit into the society and may experiment with behavior and thinking and strive to achieve self-chosen identity. Erik Erikson proposed that adolescents gradually achieve a sense of identity about them and move onto the next stage.

During adolescence, along with the biological changes the young adolescents' report change in their relationship with parents, peers, teachers, and others with whom they interact regularly. During this time the parents and the peers influence the adolescents' in the development of identity. Kroger (1947) found that there is a positive correlation between adolescents' identity exploration and commitment to secure attachment and the type of family interaction style.

In the period of adolescence, individuals are influenced by various factors in life and among these peers play a vital function. Peer influence is present from birth to death of an individual but it has a significant outcome during adolescence as adolescents begin to rely less upon their parents and become more independent and commence to spend most of their time with their friends. Berger and Rodkin (2011) propose that peer groups are significant social context for shaping individual attributes and behavior. A Peer group is defined as small social group of people with similar age and interests that may bring about a change in the social orientation of adolescents', thereby shifting the adolescents' focus from parents to the peers. As a result they may experience peer pressure. Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar, (2000) as cited in Esen (2012) define peer pressure as "group insistence and encouragement for an individual to be involved in a group activity in a particular way". There can be direct or indirect peer pressure on adolescents. But a good number of the adolescents are more influenced by the thoughts of their peers than their actions. Maxwell (2002) suggests that observation of a friend involving in various risk behaviours predict the high possibility of adolescents indulging in similar kind of behaviour in future.

Bandura (2005) proposed that peers play a major role in improving the individual efficacy and determining the life course of adolescents. A study conducted by Schunk and Meece (2005) showed that the adolescents' who share good peer relationships have better perceptions about their competence and abilities rather than those with problematic relationships. Numerous studies have shown that peers influence the adolescents' both positively such as in the achievement of academic and non-academic performance, development of self-concept, growth in self -esteem, motivating and making better carrier choice and also negatively such as in experimenting with risky behaviors' such as smoking, substance use, and risky online and offline sexual behavior and so on. Allen, Chango, Szwedo, Schad and

Marston (2012) showed that this exposure to peer group is very crucial as it may change the life structure of adulthood and result in negative outcomes such as depression, marital disharmony etc.

### **Peer Education**

Peer education or peer group counseling is one of the emerging concepts in adolescence phase. As number of studies shown the influence of peers on adolescents many educationalists, psychologists are interested in using the peers as one of the medium to educate and create awareness among the adolescents. UNICEF, 2012 proposed the concept and rationality behind the peer education. According to it peer education is based on the reality that people will not only make changes based on only what they know but also make changes based on the opinions, and actions of their close and trusted friends. It also suggests that peer educators can communicate and understand well rather than the adults and they serve as role models for change.

Peer education has a long history. It was first originated in British schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where students were appointed as monitors to pass on what they have learned from teacher and elders to their friends in and outside the class.

Parkin and McKeganey, (2000) as cited in Viju, P.D. (2013) showed that peer education was also used as a form of health promotion among young people in US in the late 1950s.

UNICEF has played an important role in the implementation of peer education programme in the schools. One of the qualitative studies conducted by UNICEF shows that the adolescents appreciated and were influenced in positive ways by the peer education programme. The study also showed that there were significant changes in the behaviour of peer educators after joining the programme and they found to be more effective than adults in changing attitudes and creating awareness among adolescents. However they failed to convey the factual knowledge to their peers. And it was found that mixture of class-based education led by adults and peer led education is more effective than one or the other in isolation.

Egbochukwu and Obiunu (2006) and Egbochukwu and Aihie (2009) examined whether peer group counseling had an effect on the improvement of self-concept among adolescents. Peer group counseling refers to the relationship between two or more individual who are of similar age and status who mutually work together to find solutions to their problems. The study showed that peer group counseling played a significant role in the enrichment of self-concept among adolescents and the effect was significantly higher for students in the single sex schools than the students in the co-education schools.

Peer education programme is become more popular and adapted well to the Indian culture. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) recognizes the potential of adolescents and developed plans to instigate their capacities in bringing change in their life as well as in the society. The ministry under the Department of School Education and Literacy initiated the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) to provide the adolescent with accurate, age appropriate and culturally relevant information. The AEP programme is coordinated by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The programme is implemented in 30 states and Union territories. In this the peers are used as a medium to create awareness among adolescents about the biological, psychological changes within themselves, relationship issues, facing the society, safety issues, peer pressure, bullying, life skills, sexual and physical harassment in the schools or in the public places etc. It also helps the adolescents to enhance their self-esteem and also include the courses about public speaking, interpersonal relationship; social skills etc. It also aims to develop responsible behaviour among students and teachers.

The Adolescent education is integrated into National Curriculum Framework (2005) in Syllabi and textbooks of all schools in India. Christ University at Bangalore is one of the pioneer institutions to adopt this programme into their curriculum. The programme found to be effective in changing the campus life and also the life of the individual who have attended the programme.

Olds and Thombs (2000) and Kung and Farrell (2000) showed that perceived peer norms and the peer pressure was directly linked to drug use than the parenting. Similarly Baumgartner, Valkenburg and Peter (2011) demonstrated that descriptive and injunctive peer standards influenced the adolescents to indulge in hazardous online and offline sexual activities. It also shows that adolescents are more swayed by what their peers do than their peers' approval of behavior.

## **Method**

### **Research Question**

The present study was intended to explore the experience of adolescents' and their parents on the peer influence.

### **Objectives**

- To understand the adolescents' experience on peer influence
- To explore the suggestions given by the adolescents on utilizing the peer influence for the development.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry employed in the studies of social sciences and it aims to comprehend the in-depth understanding of human behavior and qualitative research investigates the why and how of decision making and not just what, where and when.

The present study employed the interpretative phenomenological approach which involve detailed examination of the participant's life world; it aims to explore the personal experience and how individual make sense of their individual and social world.

Under interpretative phenomenological approach the study included in-depth interview which are used for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences.

### Sample

The present study employed Purposive Sampling as a technique of sampling. Purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sample. It is based on the typicality of the cases to be included in the sample. (Singh, 2002)

### Characteristics of Sample

The sample included 4 adolescents with the age group of 13 to 16 years. Out of 4 adolescents 2 are male and 2 are female.

The adolescents were from the nuclear family and they were staying with their parents in the same family in Bangalore. The parents of the adolescents should be formally employed and adolescent should be fluent in English.

### Method of Data Collection

The data for the study was collected through in-depth interview which are used for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences of peer influence. The in-depth interview consisted of 20 open ended questions directed to the adolescents. It is a self-prepared questionnaire validated by counselors in Bangalore.

### Procedure

In the Phase 1 the participants were briefed about the study and inform consent was signed by the participants and from their parent as the adolescent participants are legally minor to take decision of participation in the study. Then the socio demographic data were also collected from the participants.

In the Phase 2 the adolescents were interviewed and the data was collected through audio tapes.

In the Phase 3 the audio recordings of the interview was transcribed and the data was analyzed using the process of thematic analysis.

### Data Analysis

The collected interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis approach.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998 as cited in Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006).

Thus the present study employed thematic analysis approach in order to identify and understand various themes emerged in the study and to understand their relationship between them.

### Validation of the Data

The validity of the study was analyzed using member check. That refers to going back to the participants in order to clear the doubts of the researcher in the data. It was employed during the transcription of the interviews and also during the coding of the data. The study also employed memo writing as a measure of validity.

### Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent of the participants was taken before they are included in the study.
- The identities of the participants were kept confidentially.
- The participants were informed that the confidentiality of their responses as well as their results will be maintained.
- The participants was informed that the data would be used only for the research purpose if they uncomfortable it would be destroyed after the study.
- The researcher was refrained from asking personal questions to the participants which they felt uncomfortable
- If the participants desire, the results of the study would be conveyed to them.

### Results and Discussion

Table 1 :Showing the demographic details of participants

Sl. No	Age	Gender	School	Siblings	Type of family	Parents employed
P1	14	Male	St. Joseph European High School	One elder brother	Nuclear	Yes
P2	13	Male	New Cambridge English high school	One elder brother	Nuclear family	Yes
P3	14	Female	Holy convent high school	—	Nuclear family	Yes
P4	15	Female	New Cambridge English high school	One elder sister	Nuclear family	Yes

### The analysis of Adolescent's data

The data is divided into 9 global themes. Each global theme is subdivided into Organizational themes and basic themes.

Each theme has been explained in detail.

Table 2: showing the thematic chart of analysis of Adolescents'

<b>Global theme 1</b>	<b>Organizational theme</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>
Self-Awareness	Identification	1.1 Personality 1.2 Interests
<b>Global theme 2</b> Relationship	<b>Organizational theme</b> With friends	<b>Basic themes</b> 2.1 Boy friends 2.2 Girl friends 2.3 School friends 2.4 Neighborhood friends
	With parents	2.5 with mother 2.6 with father
<b>Global theme 3</b> Emotional Attachment	<b>Organizational theme</b> Support	<b>Basic themes</b> 3.1 Friends 3.2 parents
<b>Global theme 4</b> Quantity of time spend	<b>Organizational theme</b> Availability	<b>Basic themes</b> 4.1 Mother 4.2 Father
<b>Global theme 5</b> Sharing of information	<b>Organizational theme</b> With friends	<b>Basic themes</b> 5.1 General 5.2 Sexual
	With parents	5.3 general 5.4 Sexual
<b>Global theme 6</b> Recreational Activity	<b>Organizational theme</b>	<b>Basic themes</b> 6.1 friends 6.2 parents 6.3 by self
<b>Global theme 7</b> Influence of friends	<b>Organizational theme</b> Academics	<b>Basic themes</b> 7.1 Education 7.2 Career
	Relationship	7.3 mother 7.4 father
<b>Global theme 8</b> Influence of technology	<b>Organizational theme</b> By friends	<b>Basic themes</b> 8.1 Mobile 8.2 Face Book 8.3 TV 8.4 Internet 8.5 Frequency of use
<b>G.T 9</b> Peer pressure	<b>O.T</b> View	<b>B.T</b> 9.1 Perception about Peer pressure
	Experience	9.2 positive experience
		9.3 negative experiences
	Suggestions	9.4 to make it more productive

**Note:** Participant A- Adolescents

Participant M- Mothers

Participant F- Fathers

## Descriptive Explanation of Themes

### 01. Self-Awareness

#### 1a: Identification

- i. Personality
- ii. Interests

This Global theme is intended to assess the awareness of adolescents about themselves, what they feel and think about themselves. Under that it assesses adolescent's personality and interests. Each individual has his own personality and interests and it is unique to them.

Personality is the inborn traits of adolescents and tries to understand adolescent awareness and views of some of their traits. Most of them said that they are good, helpful, goes with everyone, and adjust with everything. *"Good, helpful and caring, obey my parents and many other qualities"*, Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. Some of them said that they are sensitive and one adolescent boy said that if anyone irritates him he irritates them back and talks rude when he gets angry. *"I'm good with everybody few of them irritates me I also irritates them"*. Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. All of them said that they all respects and obey their parents and elders.

All of them have wide variety of interests. Some of them are interested in music, playing Casio, *"I like to spend my time with piano most of the time"* Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. And some of them are interested in singing and listening to music. One boy is interested in collecting stickers of actors, cars, cartoons, nature etc. and created an album of it. *"I collect stickers all different types of stickers, stickers of anything anything nice I buy them like actors, cartoons, flowers, some calendars of every year few stickers like nature, animals all like that and I have an album of it"*. Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. Many of them are interested in sports like football, cricket and hockey. Some of them do not have any specific interests but they try to experiment with everything.

### 02. Relationship

#### 2a: With Friends

- i. Boy Friends
- ii. Girl Friends
- iii. School Friends
- iv. Neighbourhood Friends

#### 2b: With Parents

- i. With Mother
- ii. With Father

The Global theme has 2 organizational themes which assess relationship of adolescents with friends and with parents.

This theme measures the relationship of adolescents with their friends. It assesses their relationship with same sex and opposite sex friends, in school and in neighborhood. All adolescent's said that their interaction with the opposite sex is very less. As some of them are in coed school they just talk to other sex generally and do not share any relationship with them but generally talks to them and have fun with them. An adolescent girl told if anything applies to both the gender she'll talk to them otherwise she'll just be to herself. *"If anything applies to both boys and girls I'll tell it to them otherwise nothing. Usually whatever happens in our school it applies to both of them. Otherwise we are just friends and we share our feelings"*. Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013. Other girl said that she usually go along with her friends in a group while talking to boys and also shares everything with her friends. One adolescent boy said that he treats both gender equally but talk less with the opposite sex.

Regarding school friends most of adolescents said that they are good and shares a good bonding with them. An adolescent boy told that as a class they are united together and do not let each other down. *"School friends are all good we all are united together they don't let us down or we don't let them down"*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. Some of them are studied in same school from LKG so they know each other very well and understands each other. An adolescent girl said that she finds both good and bad qualities in her friends, and if she finds her friends doing something wrong she just tells them directly. *"I feel like I mean I find some goodness in some of my friends and some bad things also. You know I just tell them. If they are wrong I tell them you are wrong and all that."* Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013.

There was mixed views on neighbourhood friends. Some of them had many friends in their layout and some of them had no one near their house. An adolescent boy said that he has many friends near his home and they all are good, they meet on Saturday evening and cycle together, play volleyball, cricket together, they also play PS2 and computer games together. *"In the layout I have so many friends they are very good, good in studies, good in co-curricular activities. We meet together every Saturday evening and whichever activity is there we plan each other and then we take part in that activity"*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. The other adolescent girls said that they do not have any friends near their home as all of them are small kids and just stay at home or play with younger cousins at home.

On relationship with parents all adolescents reported that they are very close to mother and shares a good and close relationship with her. They treat her as a friend and share everything with mother. Adolescent girls reported that sometimes they address their mother with her names *"I treat them as friends itself. Even sometimes now I'll call them with their name"* Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013, and also said that their mothers are very supportive, understands their feelings and behaviour and also stands with them and encourage them in everything.

Some adolescents said that they share a close relationship with their father while some others said that they share distant relationship with father. Adolescent told that their fathers are very supportive and encouragers and shares all information with them. Adolescent boys reported that their father fills them with motivational thoughts and stories whenever he feel down and encourage him to fight and come over it. This is supported by the similar study conducted by Yeung and Leadbeater (2010) who examined the association between peer victimization maladaptive outcomes such as

emotional and behavioural problems and the role of parental support. The results showed that there was negative correlation between parental support and adolescents' emotional and behavioural problems parallel and across time.

Other adolescent girl said she share a distant relationship with her father, she will not share anything to him however she does talk to him friendly and spend time with him. "*not much to father because he comes late and he won't be there with me and he won't spend much time with us*". Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013. Other boy said he is scared of his father and do not give back answers to him but listens to him. One adolescent girl said she share a very close relationship with her father, treat him as friend and shares everything with him than with her mother. She sometimes addresses her father with name and enjoys wit the company of father

### 03. Emotional Attachment

#### 3a: Support

- i. Friends
- ii. Parents

This theme assesses the intimacy of adolescents with friends and with parents and support from friends and parents.

All adolescents reported that they mutually help each other in studies, if they have any doubts they clear with their friends and if their friends have any doubts they ask and clarify their doubts. If they miss any classes also friends provide their books to complete their notes.

Some adolescents also said that their friends help them in sports and physical activity. An adolescent boy expressed that on Saturday and Sunday all of his friends assemble at one place and play sports, cycle and race together and help each other to keep their body fit. One adolescent girl said that her friends teach her some techniques and some important things to her and share their experiences with her when she goes for hockey. They also motivate her to perform well in hockey. "*In playing I'll play hockey in my school during that time also they used to help me out to play ha.. they teach me, they tell me more about their experience in that and they tell me this is more important than that concentrate more on this like that they used to tell me when I play hockey.*" Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013.

Some adolescents reported that their friends morally support them and encourage them to participate in activities and also motivates to study well and achieve good grades. Some said that they also corrects them when they are doing something wrong, they advised that it is wrong and not to commit same act again.

Regarding support from parents, all adolescents said that parents help them in their studies and support and encourage them to participate in any activity and do everything what they like.

An adolescent boy said that his parents help him in his class project works, his mother helps him to get information and cut the pictures and father give suggestions and guide him to do well. Other boy reported that his father take tuitions for him every day 1 hour after coming from work. He teaches him languages and mathematics. "*Parents help me in studies, father after coming from work every day he sit with me for 1 hour and teach me Kannada and mathematics.*" Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. His mother sits with him during his tests and exams and makes him to study well.

Others reported that parents provide suggestion and guidance for all kinds of activities and if adolescent are interested in some courses or classes they try hard and support them to join the course.

Parents also provide moral support to adolescents and tell them about good and bad, right and wrong and pros and consequences of actions and motivate them to walk in a good way and to do good deeds. Studies have also shown that support from parents has a direct impact on the adolescents' prosocial behaviour. In a study by Ma, Shek and Lam (2000) analyzed the parental, peer and teacher emotional support and influences on the prosocial and antisocial behavior of Asian students. The results showed that there was positive co relation between perceived parental support and frequency of prosocial behavior and negative correlation between perceived parental influences and frequency of rebellious behavior. It showed that adolescents who share strong bond with their family and friends showed lesser frequencies of rebellious behavior than the adolescents with weaker connection with their family and friends.

### 04. Quantity of Time Spend

#### 4a: Availability

- i. Mother
- ii. Father

This theme measures the quantity of time the adolescents' spending with their parents, mothers and fathers respectively.

The recent report By National Association of Social workers says that there is negative correlations between the amounts of time spend with their parents and adolescents involvement in the hazardous behaviours. Adolescents are given mixed views about quantity of time adolescents spending with their parents. Some adolescents says that they spend more time with their mother rather than their father while some others says that they spend more time with their father than with their mother.

An adolescent boy said that his mother will be keep waiting for him and she will be at home when he comes back from school and personally attends the needs of him. "*Mother keeps waiting for me every day and she comes from work she is tired she sleeps for a while and she gets up, she is always there when I come home*". Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. Whereas other boy said that his mother also will be at home but she will be busy with some other things and do not spend time with him. Similarly an adolescent girl said that she is more close to her mother and her mother also comes home early and spends lots of time together whereas the other girl told that her mother goes to work early in the morning and comes home late and she will be tired and she is able to spend time with her mother only on weekends.

On availability of father adolescent boys said that they spend considerable amount of time with their father, a boy told that his father teaches him languages and mathematics for 1 hour every day and through this they spend time together.

Adolescent girls have contradictory views about amount of time spend with their father. One adolescent girl told that her father always accompany her to school, to church and to other places. He will not let her alone and always goes with her. So through this they spend enormous amount of time with each other. Whereas other adolescent girl told that her father comes home late and does not get along and spend time with her which makes her difficult to share information with him.

## 55. Sharing Information

### 5a. With Friends

- i. General
- ii. Sexual

### 5b. With parents

- i. General
- ii. Sexual

This theme evaluates the kind of information shared by adolescents with their friends and parents.

All adolescents reported that they share different kinds of information with their friends according to their interests.

They all said they talk about studies and clarify doubts with each other and they share their feelings, thoughts and views and talk about ongoing interesting and some exciting news in the society and everyone makes comments on that. *“friends help me a lot in my studies then in my physical activity. If they have any doubts they come and ask me if I have any doubts I go and ask them”*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. They also share secrets with some of close friends. *“They help me in many activities; I too help them in many activities. They share their views and thoughts to me, I too share my thoughts. They tell to me everything whatever happens to them whether it is positive or negative”*. Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013. One adolescent girl said that she feels very comfortable with friends, what she cannot share with parents also she'll share with them and there is no hesitation to talk to them.

Regarding sharing information related to bodily changes, most of the adolescents told that they do not discuss such kinds of matter with friends. One adolescent boy said they do not talk to each other about these information but they learn in the school as course requirement however they also keep nick names to the friends based on their development of physical characteristics like for a boy with thick moustache they call him “Meese” mama like that. *“depends on their physical characteristics we just make fun of them keep nick names for those who'll have full moustache, who does not has also we'll keep a name apart from that we don't share anything, nick names like if he has so much of moustache we call him Meese mama, like that”*. Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. Even girls told that she does not share this information with each other but when her friends speak she'll just listen to them silently. *“I don't share these things to my friends. I'll just be common with them nothing, and when they share it to me I'll listen to them and I just nod my head that's all”*. Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013. Whereas one adolescent girl told that she will share this information with her friends, and in the case of emergency, during periods or when they go out they help each other and friends also suggest her to try some new products of cosmetics.

On sharing information with their parents some adolescents told that they share everything to their parents about what happened in school, in tuitions, with teachers and among friends and some funny things etc. Some of them said that they talk while having dinner *“Every day I'll share with them whatever I happened in my school and by myself I openly speak to them while having dinner”*, Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013, while some other told that it depends on the mood of the adolescents as well as mood of the parents.

Regarding sharing information related to bodily changes with their parents some adolescents reported that they discuss and share information on a superficial level. Adolescent girls reported that their mother explained to them everything during their menstruation time and adolescents are also encouraged to ask and clarify their doubts with them. One adolescent boy said that he asked some questions to parents by observing the changes in his elder brother and clarified his curiosity and doubts.

## 66. Recreational Activity

### 6a. by adolescents

- i. With Friends
- ii. With Parents
- iii. By self

This evaluates the way adolescents spend their free time with friends, with parents and by self. This also measures the closeness of adolescents with their friends and parents.

All adolescents reported that they play with their friends during free time, in class hours they play some chit games like sets, kalla police etc. otherwise they play badminton, football, through ball and some other sports with each other. *“Free time we play few games, physically we play in the ground volleyball, through ball and basketball all those kind of games we play in class indoor games also we play sets, kalla police everything”*. Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. *“During holidays every day we play cricket or we play PS2, we play computer and then we play football every day in holidays”*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. They also said that they go out with their friends usually on the last day of exams or on the first day of the school. Some adolescents reported that once in a month or once in a six month they go out with their friends. *“We go out monthly once or six months once we go out like McDonalds or Orion mall we go, we enjoy and at least six months once we go”*. Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013.

Some adolescents told that they plan out activities for programmes or for any function at school. An adolescent boy said that they plan activities for teacher's day and children day function and for other function near their home. Some of them told that they rarely watch movies with friends.

On recreational activities with parents most of the adolescents reported that they like spending time at home with their parents, talk and share information and discuss about some of the issues with their parents and they said that they like watching movies together at home. *“After my studies I go to watch movies, some media shows that time they do come*

*we all watch together we'll just talk and discuss if anything matter should be discussed we discuss with each other".* Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013. All adolescents reported that once in a while they go out with their parents, once or twice in a year they go to tourist places and natives with their parents. They often go for shopping and evening walks together.

Regarding their activities when they are alone, most of the adolescents reported that they watch movies when they are at home, and carry on their hobbies. Some reported that they play Casio; some others said they do painting and some other craft works and others told that they do mimicries, and learn acting skills.

## 07. Influence of Friends

### 7a. Academics

- i. Education
- ii. Career

### 7b. Relationship

- i. Mother
- ii. Father

This theme assesses the influence of friends on adolescents' academics and relationship with parents.

All adolescents reported that they mutually help each other in studies and clarifies their doubt with each other and help others to solve some mathematical problems and discuss about some important questions to study for the exam. An adolescent girl said all her friends studies well which motivates her to study more and secure good marks and higher marks than her friends. *"In academics all of my friends study well and that influence that I have to score more marks than them and if we any test like that and all I'll try I'll get to I'll also try to get more marks than them"*. Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013. Other adolescent boy told that one of his friends helps him to study well by playing pranks with him like by telling he will be absent for the exam he makes the boy to study well and on the day of exam he will be present and also made the boy to pay interest and study well. One adolescent girl said that if she misses any class her friends updates what happened in the class and also makes her to understand the lessons. This view is supported by Liem and Martin in 2011 conducted a study which examined adolescents' academic performance and general self-esteem in relation to the adolescents' perception of their affiliation with same sex and opposite sex peers. The results showed that same sex friends had an immediate effect on the academic performance of the adolescents.

Regarding career and future plans most of the adolescents said that they have discussed about their ambitions and future plans with each other and most of them strongly believe that what one wishes he will become that and should try hard to achieve the goal. *"We have discussed about career issues also we planned like let's become engineer, doctors we are planning for those, school friends and layout friends we'll discuss and each one wish, what he wishes to become he become that"*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. One adolescent girl told that she has not discussed anything about career and future plans but have expressed their ambitions with each other. Other adolescent girl told that they have discussed about different courses and the relevance of the course in the society and the difficult level of the society and they have also discussed about the status of different colleges and making choices of colleges to join. She said her friends are decided to take same course and to join same college in PUC. *"They usually tell me what's going on we used to talk usually now science has become very low so many members are taking science so now they are going on to commerce so we have decided something may be the one which is going on so we go on to commerce so like that wise we discuss and we just talk about colleges which is very worst which is ok and which is good and so that we talk"*. Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013.

Regarding the influence of friends on relationship with parents all adolescents reported that friends have not influenced on the relationship between adolescents and parents. They have told that friends do not enter into the personal matter and they are just friends, *"they don't influence my relationship with my parents, they don't enter into my personal matter. Friends are friends that's all"*, Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013, and there are no changes in the relationship between them and their parents. The interaction is same from childhood and there is no influence of friends.

But an adolescent girl said that her friends advised her to share everything with her mother and not to hide anything from her as she is more knowledgeable and knows more than friends.

## 08. Influence of Technology

### 8a. by friends

- i. Mobile
- ii. Face book
- iii. TV
- iv. Internet
- v. Frequency of use

This theme evaluates the influence of friends on usage of technology by adolescents. On usage of mobile some adolescents told that they have their own mobile and sim while some other told that they do not use mobile and sometimes use their parents mobile. *"I don't use mobile actually I'll take my mom's mobile."* Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. Those who have mobile told that they do not take their mobiles to school only if there is fest in school and if they come late they take mobile to schools but they take mobile to tuitions. One adolescent girl said that she'll use mobile to chat with her friends, friends whom she has met after a long time they exchange their numbers and chat usually after her studies which she uses as a recreational time from studies. *"To just chat with my friends after a long time I get them so I get chatting with them about whatever has happened this by getting each other we'll get to talk to each other. like my childhood friends whom I met after a long time if they have my number they used to text me and I used to text with them but after my studies I used to text with them so that I get some time relax so that I can text with them where my mind get sometime relax ha"*. Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013. And her friends are advised her to not to answer blank calls and to immediately inform her parents about that.

Regarding the use of face book most of the adolescents reported that they have own face book accounts and use it to chat with friends, make friends and share photos with each other. They also said that they are not active in face book they login once in a month or on Sundays and during summer and winter holidays. An adolescent girl told that she does not have face book account and she does not know about usage of face book. She just know that people make friends and share photos through face book and not interested in opening face book account. *"I don't have any account in face book. Actually you know everyone will tell that face book but I really don't know what it is. They'll tell you can chat in face book but I really don't know what is the chatting and all. I have just seen that but I don't know anything about that I just knew about the face book is that you can make friends and you can add some images something like that and that's all I know about face book".* Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013.

On use of TV most of the adolescents said that they watch TV only when they are free, on Sundays or on weekends. Sometimes after coming home from school as refreshment they watch for half an hour to one hour. They said that they watch songs, movies, sports etc. One adolescent boy told that he watch TV for more period of time and spend time on watching English and Hindi movies and pays more attention to the script and dialogues and acting skills of the actors. He also said that he'll byhart the dialogues which help him in studying and byharting his lessons. He told that byharting dialogues increases his memory power and benefit him to perform better in his exams. *"On seeing the dialogues and byhart movie, byhart movies means if they give big book or script and all it will be easy for me to byhart. Now if you give me text book I won't be able to byhart but if you display that act means I'll be perfect, 2 times if I see I'll be perfect. I watch movies to improve all my memory power."* Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. His friends have advised him to stop watching movies and to watch some discovery and sports channel but he has not listened to them.

A study by Baumgartner (2011) examined the descriptive and injunctive peer standards and its effects on the on adolescents' risky online sexual conduct. "Descriptive and injunctive peer norms are the adolescents' subjective beliefs about their peers' behavior and approval" (Baumgartner 2011). The results of the study showed that the adolescents' involvements in risky online sexual activities are predicted by both the kind of peer norms. Thus the study suggests that peers acts and approval strongly influenced the adolescents' hazardous online and offline sexual behaviors. But the present study rejects it where it shows that adolescents are not influenced by their peers behaviour and approval and use internet only for the class assignments and not for anything else. All adolescents' reported that they use internet for their class project and assignments. Some articulated that only if it is necessary they use the internet otherwise they refer books for their projects. An adolescent boy said that he'll use internet to download songs and pictures of some activists, singers etc. Most of the adolescents have system and internet connection at home, an adolescent girl told that she'll use internet only when her parents are at home and otherwise she'll not use the internet.

On frequency of usage of these electronic gadgets most of the adolescents stated that they usually use on Sundays or during holidays. Some reported that their TV usage has been increased and some told that their usage of mobile has been increased.

## 9. Peer Pressure

### 9a. View

- i. Perception about peer influence

### 9b. Experience

- i. Positive experience
- ii. Negative experience

### 9c. Suggestions

- i. To make peer influence more productive

This theme evaluates the adolescents' perception of peer pressure, their experience of peer pressure and some suggestions to make peer pressure more productive to the adolescents.

On perception of peer influence most of the adolescents stated that friends are both helpful and unhelpful and depends on the kinds of friends people make. An Adolescent girl said that even though adolescents are brought up in good family through the influence of friends they may go in a wrong way *"they experience because of some bad friends those also go in a bad way even they brought up in the good way also because of them some may go in a wrong way but not all friends some friends are very bad also it depended on their friendship which they make"*, Participant A4, Personal Communication, 2013, whereas other adolescent boy put forward contradictory view stating that even though friends are there to lead individual in a good or bad way it solely depended on the adolescent to choose either the good or wrong path. *"many people will be here to help us negatively and many people will be there to help us positively and it's our choice whether we take right route or the wrong route"*. Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013.

Regarding the experience of peer pressure all adolescents reported that their friends have helped them in studies, sports and encouraged them to participate in activities and cultural programmes. An adolescent boy stated that his friends have elected him as the gang leader and they have lots of fun together and they always go and play together. An adolescent girl stated that her friends have advised her to leave the bad company of friends and as she listened to them she left the group and now she is happy.

On negative experience of peer pressure many adolescents reported that they were caught talking and disturbing in the class and sent to principal room and got scolding from teachers and parents. One boy said that if anything happens like that they will not point out the boy and do not accept to send him to principal office and will fight for him. Other adolescent boy reported that on advice of his friends to hide remarks from parents he glued two pages of diaries together but he was caught by parents and got scolding from them. *"So I wrote remark and turn the page remark was not there then I came to I flipped two pages together so I stick the page together so when I turn the pages it look like that page did not exist at all I did that but still I got caught"*. Participant A2, Personal Communication, 2013. Others stated that friends are helpful but sometimes they should understand the situation and emotions of adolescents and adjust to it and not to pressurize more on some particular issues. *"Pressure is one other issue it's like they don't understand what has happened*

just keep on telling something or the other and that time you feel irritated". Participant A3, Personal Communication, 2013.

Adolescents' are given various kinds of suggestion on how to make peer pressure more positive and beneficial for the adolescent. These suggestions mainly depended on their experience of peer pressure, age and social support. Adolescents' reported that it solely depended on the adolescent conscience to either choose right or wrong path and depend on the adolescent ability to handle the situation. "*It depends on the child conscience whether it depends on him whether he should take this route or not. Conscience is there with everyone which indicates whether this is good or bad and it depends on the child whether he has to take good route or bad route ya ultimately it depends on the thinking of the child*". Participant A1, Personal Communication, 2013. Others said that it is good to avoid those kinds of adolescents and to join some good group of friends. They also stated to maintain a good relationship with the old friends and to maintain a distance from strangers and even with the known friends.

### **Summary of theme emerged from the analysis of adolescents' data**

Adolescents have a good relationship with their friends and parents. They spend enormous amount of time with each other. Some adolescents reported that they spend more time with their mothers and others said that they spend more time with their fathers. Adolescents receive support both from parents and friends. Both of them help in their studies, sports and other cultural activities. Parents provide moral and emotional support to adolescents when they feel down or sad. Adolescents share general information with friends but do not share any information related to the bodily changes. Adolescents' girls have shared information related to bodily changes with their mothers rather than the adolescent boys. Elder siblings played an important role in helping the adolescents learning about bodily changes and other things. Adolescents have learnt a great deal about bodily changes by observing the changes in their elder siblings.

Friends have helped the adolescents in their studies and motivated them to study and achieve more and also influenced the career choices of adolescents. Adolescents report that friends have not influenced any changes in their relationship with parents. The relationship with parents is unchanged from childhood.

Friends have influenced the adolescents to open account in face book and mail id and also to buy mobiles. All adolescents have own face book account and chat with friends. Everyone do not have mobile, but they use their parents mobile to contact their friends. Use of internet is limited only for school assignments and the usage of TV is reduced by adolescents.

Peer pressure is harmful according to the adolescents. They may influence them in the wrong way. None of them have experience any major influence from their friends apart from talking in class and caught by teacher and send to principal office. A boy reported a severe experience of peer pressure where he glued the pages of remarks together to hide from parents and caught by them and by teachers. On suggestions to make peer influence more productive all adolescents reported that it depends on the adolescents' conscience to get influenced by friends or not. Their choices should be clear and it also good to avoid those kinds of friends.

### **Summary**

Adolescents have a good relationship with their friends and parents. They spend enormous amount of time with each other. Some adolescents reported that they spend more time with their mothers and others said that they spend more time with their fathers. Adolescents receive support both from parents and friends. Both of them help in their studies, sports and other cultural activities. Parents provide moral and emotional support to adolescents when they feel down or sad. Adolescents share general information with friends but do not share any information related to the bodily changes. Adolescents' girls have shared information related to bodily changes with their mothers rather than the adolescent boys. Elder siblings played an important role in helping the adolescents learning about bodily changes and other things. Adolescents have learnt a great deal about bodily changes by observing the changes in their elder siblings.

Friends have helped the adolescents in their studies and motivated them to study and achieve more and also influenced the career choices of adolescents. Adolescents report that friends have not influenced any changes in their relationship with parents. The relationship with parents is unchanged from childhood.

Friends have influenced the adolescents to open account in face book and mail id and also to buy mobiles. All adolescents have own face book account and chat with friends. Everyone do not have mobile, but they use their parents mobile to contact their friends. Use of internet is limited only for school assignments and the usage of TV is reduced by adolescents.

Peer pressure is harmful according to the adolescents. They may influence them in the wrong way. None of them have experience any major influence from their friends apart from talking in class and caught by teacher and send to principal office. A boy reported a severe experience of peer pressure where he glued the pages of remarks together to hide from parents and caught by them and by teachers.

On suggestions to make peer pressure more productive to the adolescents, participants reported that everything depends on the adolescents' conscience whether to get influenced from friends. Adolescents should be able to make wright choices and also seek the help of parents and elders. Adolescents found it good to avoid those kinds' friends for better future.

### **Limitations**

First, all data were self-reports. Participants were asked to describe their experience of peer influence on them and on their adolescent children. All responses are highly related to self-desirability of participants. The responses are highly superficial. Further studies need to consider multi-informant and use of some tests to assess the peer influence on adolescents.

Secondly, Most of the participants hail from Christianity. This makes a difference because in Christianity children attends the Sunday school in church which taught values and also addresses issues like time management, sexuality, pressure, coping with stress etc. And in evening all the family members assemble for family prayers. Thus parents get some amount of time to spend with their children.

Thirdly, the data is not saturated and most of participants responded on a superficial level.

## Suggestions for Future Study

The present study analyzed young adolescents residing in nuclear family and middle class families the future studies should also consider adolescents from single parent families, joint families and adolescents from high class and low class families.

The current study did employed interpretative approach and semi structured interview to collect the data, the future studies should consider using some quantitative methods of data collection like using scales to be more specific.

## Acknowledgements

I begin by thanking God for his blessings in successfully completing the study. I thank my institution and the HOD of Psychology Department Dr. Tony Sam George for granting the permission to do this study. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to my research guide Dr. Anuradha Sathiyaseelan for her constant support and guidance in doing this research.

I would like to thank all the participants of my study without whom the study would be incomplete.

## References

Allen, J. P., Chango, J., Szwedo, D., Schad, M. M., & Marston, E. (2012). Predictors of susceptibility to peer influence regarding substance use in adolescence. *Journal of Child Development*, 83(1), 337-350. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01682.x

Bandura, A., Caprara, G. V., Pastorelli, C., Regalia, C., & Scabini, E. (2005). Impact of adolescents' filial self-efficacy on quality of family functioning and satisfaction. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 15(1), 71–97.

Baumgartner, S. E., Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2011). The influence of descriptive and injunctive peer norms on adolescents' risky sexual online behaviour. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking*, 14(12), 753-758. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2010.0510

Berger, C., & Rodkin, P. C. (2011). Group influences on individual aggression and prosociality: Early adolescents who change peer affiliations. *Journal of Social Development*, 21 (2), 396-413. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2011.00628.x

Collins, W. A., & Laursen, B. (2004). Changing relationships, changing youth: Interpersonal contexts of adolescent development. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 24, 55–62.

Derek, I. K., & Andrew, S. P. (2013). Alcohol makes you macho and helps you make friends: The role of masculine norms and peer pressure in adolescent boys' and girls' alcohol use. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 48(5), 371-378.

Egbochukwu, E. O., & Aihie, N. O. (2009). Peer group counselling and school influence on adolescents' self-concept. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 36(1).

Egbochukwu, E. O., & Obiunu, J. J. (2006). The effect of reciprocal peer counselling in the enhancement of self-concept among adolescents. *Education*, (USA) 126(3), 504-511.

Esen, K., & Binnaz. (2012). Analyzing peer pressure and Self-Efficacy expectations among adolescents. *Academic Journal article from Social Behavior and Personality*, 40(8), 1301-1309. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2012.40.8.1301>

Kroger, J. (1947). *Identity development, adolescence through adulthood*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Delhi, India: Sage Publications. 51- 78.

Liem, G. A. D., & Martin, A. J. (2011). Peer relationships and adolescents' academic and non-academic outcomes: Same-sex and opposite-sex peer effects and the mediating role of school engagement. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 183-206. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8279.2010.02013.x

Marshal, M. P., & Chassin, L. (2000). Peer influence on adolescent alcohol use: The moderating role of parental support and discipline. *Applied Developmental Science*, 4(2), 80-88.

Maxwell, K.A. (2002). Friends: The role of peer influence across adolescent risk behaviors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31, 267-277. doi: 10.1023/A:1015493316865.

McLeod, S. A. (2008). *Erik Erikson / Psychosocial Stages - Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>

Santor, D. A., Messervey, D., & Kusumakar, V. (2000). Measuring peer pressure, popularity, and conformity in adolescent boys and girls: Predicting school performance, sexual attitudes, and substance abuse. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29, 163-182. <http://doi.org/bmpfb>

Schunk, D. H., & Meece, J. L. (2005). Self-efficacy development in adolescence. In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*, 71-96. Charlotte, NC: Information Age

Singh, A. K. (2002). *Tests, measurements and research methods in behavioural sciences*. Bharati bawan publishers and distributors, Patna.

Yeung, R., & Leadbeater, B. (2010). Adults make a difference: The protective effects of parent and teacher emotional support on emotional and behavioural problems of peer-victimized adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38(1), 80-98. doi: 10.1002/jcop.20353

Yoo, J. J. (2009). Peer influence on adolescents boys' appearance management behaviours. *Adolescence*, 44(176), 1017-103.

Zamboanga, B. L., Schwartz, S. J., Ham, L. S., Jarvis, L. H., & Olthuis, J. V. (2009). Do alcohol expectancy outcomes and valuations mediate peer influences and lifetime alcohol use among early adolescents? *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 170(4), 359-376. doi: 10.1080/00221320903218380.