

# Adolescents with Antisocial Behaviour: A Qualitative Study

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**Abstract-** The present study aims to identify the possible antecedents and consequences of antisocial behaviour among adolescents. The sample included 15 male adolescents in the age range of 15-18 years, staying in rehabilitation homes. The kind of antisocial behaviour which adolescents indulge in related to petty crime (small theft), serious crime (attempt to murder, theft) and heinous crime (murder, rape). Data were collected through in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Results showed that respondents identified four antecedents and three consequences of antisocial behaviour. The antecedents identified were faulty family environment, negative peer support and peer pressure, forced intimate relationship, personality (aggression and impulsivity) and drug use. The consequences included loneliness, negative self concept, Hopelessness about future life and low self esteem. These findings have implications for drafting of policies, interventions to reduce antisocial behaviour, help groups for victims and families and strategies to enhance mental health and well-being of adolescents who indulge in antisocial behaviour.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Antisocial Behaviour, Family Environment, Loneliness, self-esteem.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. For example, puberty now typically begins during preadolescence, particularly in females. Adolescent has been described as the period in life when an individual is no longer a child, but not yet an adult. It is a period in which an individual undergoes enormous physical and psychological change. Physical growth and development are accompanied by sexual maturation, often leading to intimate relationship. Antisocial behavior is a pattern of behavior that is verbally or physically harmful to other people, animal or property including behavior that severely violates social expectations for a particular environment. Antisocial behaviors are actions that harm or lack consideration for the well-being of others. According to Farrington (2005), "antisocial behavior in childhood and adolescence are categorized as behavior disorders, impulsiveness, stealing, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying, running away from home and truant [1]."

Nobody is a criminal by birth. Due to circumstances, he is. One's socio-cultural milieu, both within and outside of the house, has a tremendous impact on how they live their lives and develop as a whole. According to Healy and Bronner (1926), the causes of juvenile delinquency are: Bad company, adolescent instability and impulses, early sex experience, mental conflicts, extreme social suggestibility, love of adventure, motion picture, school dissatisfaction, poor recreation, street life, vocational dissatisfaction, sudden impulse; and physical conditions of all sorts [2]. A study done by Uday Shankar in India in 1958 on 140 samples, found that 13.3% adolescents with antisocial behaviour came from broken homes [3]. The home may be broken up by death of one or both of the parents, as well as due to serious sickness, mental instability, desertion, or divorce. Martin (1961) identified a major contributing factor to delinquency as the sense of detachment from one's family and society [4]. An Indian psychologist Dharam Raj reported in his paper in 2018 that Henry and Gold (1973), 66% adolescent's antisocial behaviours are committed along with peer groups and antisocial behaviour negatively correlated with socioeconomic status [5].

## Adolescent with Antisocial behaviour in India

Several heinous, severe, and petty crimes are being committed regularly in India such as theft, burglary, snatching, dacoity, murder and rape etc. in whole of the country. Unfortunate thing is that all types of this antisocial behaviour are also being committed by adolescents (10 to 18 years).

According to the Census of 2011, the total population of India is 1.26 billion, in which 253.2 million (21.01%) people are adolescents. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, adolescent's crimes are up 37 % (22740 cases in 2010 & 31,170 cases in 2021) in the last 11 years. A total of 37,444 juveniles were apprehended in 31,170 cases, out of which 32,654 juveniles were apprehended under cases of IPC and 4,790 juveniles were apprehended under cases of SLL during 2021 (NCRB 2021). Majority of juveniles in conflict with law apprehended under IPC & SLL crimes were in the age group of 16 years to 18 years (76.2%) (28,539 out of 37,444) during 2021 [6]. National Crime Record Bureau, 2021 (NCRB) data shows that a majority of adolescents (76.20%) arrested were between 16-18 years of age & 9.31 % were illiterate, 25.05 % had passed primary school, 45.87 % student passed above primary to matric, 16.89 % above Matric to Higher Secondary and 2.88 % students above higher secondary (NCRB 2021).

### The present study

In this study, we investigated the lived experiences of adolescents who indulge in antisocial behaviour using a qualitative approach guided by a semi-structured interview schedule. As mentioned earlier, few qualitative studies have explored adolescents' antisocial behaviour experiences. The primary goal of quantitative research is to evaluate a theory. Researchers must find or develop a testable variable in order for this to happen [7]. When attempting to understand an unidentified occurrence, this develops into a cause for concern. Unidentified variables cannot be observed, tested, or analysed. Therefore, quantitative research may not fully illuminate the effects of different stressors or "strains" on the lives of antisocial adolescents [8]. Therefore the following research questions were investigated- 1) According to Antisocial Adolescents, what are the reasons for indulging him in antisocial behaviour? 2) What are the experiences of adolescents who are kept in Observation homes (a home for Juvenile in Conflict with law)?

## II.METHOD

### Sampling and participants

Using purposive sampling, participants were recruited from Observation homes (a home for Juvenile in Conflict with law) the Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh, India. The participants were contacted through visiting the observation home. The final sample comprised 15 participants aged between 15 and 18 years (M=16 year 6 months). For the inclusion criteria of participants were – required to committed a heinous and severe crime. Participants were excluded if they were committed a petty crime or the over age of 18 or if they did not provide their consent.

### Procedure

Interviews were conducted directly. They lasted between 40 to 60 minutes (Mean Time=48.25 minutes). Recording of interviews was prohibited in the observation home, so the interviews were written word by word. The interview focused on the primary research objectives of the study. The sample size of 15 participants was consistent with usual recommended number of participants for studies using in-depth interviews [9].

Before the interviews, all participants were provided with complete ethical information about the study to provide informed consent to engage in the research process. After obtaining consent from superintendent of observation home, semi-structured interviews with each participant were conducted. Participants were asked open-ended questions for this study.

### Quality Considerations:

The Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) gave its clearance for the current study before it could be carried out. During each stage of the study, analysis, and reporting of the findings, research recommendations were followed to assure the quality of the current study [10].

### Analysis

Individual data transcriptions were then made. The ideas and experiences of the participants were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) about to the study's specified goals [11]. Throughout the analytical process, transcripts were reviewed numerous times to become comfortable with the data, and significant quotes from the transcripts were categorised under the pertinent themes. Emerging themes were identified and coded at the analysis's next stage.

## III.RESULTS

Two major themes related to participants' antisocial behaviour were identified. Relevant themes referenced throughout the interviews are presented below. Thematic analysis highlighted the factors that why antisocial behavior is done by adolescents and what is the consequences of that behavior. The samples' demographic details and the relevant themes referenced throughout the interviews are presented below.

**Table 1: Showing the demographic details of the participants of the study.**

ID	Age	Education	Committed Crime	Living time	Parental status	Religion
1.	17	10 <sup>th</sup>	Heinous	8 months	Both	Muslim
2.	15	5 <sup>th</sup>	Serious	2 years (3 <sup>rd</sup> time)	Both	Hindu
3.	17	8 <sup>th</sup>	Heinous	9 months	Both	Hindu
4.	17	Illiterate	Heinous	6 moths (3 <sup>rd</sup> time)	Single	Muslim
5.	15	Illiterate	Serious	2 years (3 <sup>rd</sup> time)	None	Hindu
6.	16	Illiterate	Heinous	7 months (2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	Single	Hindu
7.	17	Illiterate	Serious	18 months (2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	Single	Hindu
8.	16.6	5 <sup>th</sup>	Heinous	02 year 4 month	Both	Muslim
9.	17.6	11 <sup>th</sup>	Heinous	2 years (2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	Both	Hindu
10.	17.6	09 <sup>th</sup>	Heinous	16 months	Both (Divorced)	Muslim
11.	17	Illiterate	Heinous	3.6 years	Both	Hindu
12.	15	05 th	Serious	14 months	Single	Hindu
13.	16	Illiterate	Serious	08 months	Both	Muslim
14.	17	Illiterate	Heinous	15 months	Both	Hindu
15.	18	8 th	Heinous	02 years	Single	Hindu

**Table 2. Identified themes and related sub-themes.**

Serial No.	Theme	Sub-theme
1	Antecedents behind antisocial Behaviour	Family- (Parenting Style & Home environment)
		Peer Group and Peer Pressure
		Involvement in Sexual Activities (Sometime Love affairs)
		Personality (Aggression & Impulsivity).
2	Psychological Consequences of antisocial behaviour	Drug use
		Loneliness
		Negative Self concept
		Low Self Esteem
		Hopelessness about future life

**Theme first-** Antecedents behind antisocial Behaviour, involves the causes that leads to adolescents' indulging in antisocial activities or behaviour. It includes- family (parenting style & home environment), peer group and peer pressure, involvement in sexual activities (sometime love affairs), personality (aggression & impulsivity) and drug use.

**Family- (Parenting Style & Home environment):**

*Pahle meri ma ka nidhan huaa, uske baad mere pita ne dusari sadi ki, fir mere pita ka nidhan ho gya. Ab meri sauteli ma ne dusari sadi kar li hai. Vo meri panch sal ki bahan aur mujhe janjeer me badhkar bahut marti hai, khana bhi nahi deti hai, esiliye main apni bahan ke lekar bhag gya tha, bheekh mangkar jee leta magar us ghar me nahi rahat ( Case 12)*

**Peer Group and Peer Pressure:**

*Mere dost ke khate se 20,000 hajar rupay kat gye the, game khelte samay. Usko lekar vo bahut pareshan rahta tha, ekdin mujhse kaha ki chalo ek bachche ko kidnap karte hai, ek lakh mangenge, unme se 20,000 ham pancho log milkar le lenge, tumhe mobile chahiye thi na, tum un paiso se mobile le lena. Mai uski baton me aa gya aur jan pahchan ke ek ladke ko ham pancho logon ne milkar utha liya, do din baad tv mein news dekhkar ham logo ne dar ke mare us ladke ko marker phek diya. Phir bhi pta nahi kaise police ham logon ko pakad li (Case No. 09).*

**Involvement in Sexual Activities (Sometime Love affairs):**

*Main ek ladki se bahut pyar karta hu. Vo balik hai, apni marji se mere sath bhagi thi, usne bayan bhi diya tha ki vo mere sath apni marji se rah rahi thi, mere upar se 376 hataya jay. Maine uske sath rape nahi kiya hai, ham dono bahut pyar karten hai, ek dusre ki marji se hi sex kiya tha. (Case No. 04).*

**Personality (Aggression & Impulsivity):**

*Maine insta par apni photo apne bahan ke sath uploade ki thi, mere jaan pahchan ka ek dadka us photo par gande gande comment karta tha, bahut bar use samjhaya lakin vo mana nahi. Ek bar use pass bulakar samjha raha tha, ki comment delete kar le, vo maan nahi raha tha, mujhko bahut gussa a gya. Maine do goli marker uski hatya kar di. Gusse mein main khud ko rok nahi pata hu. Jab gussa aata hai to tan man mein jaise aag lag jati hai. (Case No. 01)*

**Drug use:**

*Jab mujhe nashe ki dhun savar ho jati hai, to mujhe nasha chahiye hota hai, uske liye mujhe jo bhi karna padta hai, mai kar deta hu. Chahe kisi ki jan hi kyan n leni pade mujhe koi hichkichahat nahi hoti hai. Main ek din me char panch hajar ka nasha kar jata hu. Nasha ke bina mere sharer me jaan hi nahi rahta hai. Nashe ke liye main chori, murder sab kuchh kar sakta hu. (Case No. 07)*

**Second theme-** The second theme is related to the psychological problems that adolescents face after shifting in observation homes. It includes- loneliness, negative self concept, low self esteem and hopelessness about future life

**Loneliness:**

*Mammi ki bahut yaad aa rahi thi, esi vajah se hath par bled se kat akr maa ka naam likh liya hu kisse baat karu yahan par, jiske paas jaata ju, vo bhaga deta hai, haya par mera koi dost nahi hai. Main biklul akela hu. (Case No. 13)*

**Negative Self concept:**

*Apne dushman ko jaan se mar dunga, bandook se goli marunga, ghar par kisi ko kuchh nahi bataunga. Kuchh bhi ho jaye, chahe mujhe jingi bhar jail me sadna pade lekin jin logon ne mujhe jhoothe case me fasaya hai main unko jinda nahi chhodunga. Main apradhi banna chahta hu, taki log mujhse dare. (Case No. 13)*

**Low Self Esteem:**

*Main yaha kabhi khush nahi rahta hu. Do sal se jail mein pada sad raha hu ki apne upar se vishwas hi khatm ho gya hai ki main bhi jindi mein kuchh kar sakta hu. Mere hindgi mujh par boj ban gyi hai. Es case ki vajah se mera jeevan chaupat ho gya hai. (Case No. 08)*

**Hopelessness about future life:**

*Maine apne dost ka murder nahi kiya hai. Lakin yah ghatna samchar me itna jyada nikal chuki hai ki sab log yahi sochte hain ki main hi hattyara hu. Ab main padh likh bhi nahi sakta hu, kisi ke ghar aa ja nahi sakta hu, mere dost nahi ban sakte hain. Mera jeevan barbad ho gya hai. Main kisi kaam ka nahi rah. Mai jinda hi nahi rahna chahta. Main mar jana chahta hu. (Case No.09)*

#### IV.DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to understand the subjective experiences of adolescents with antisocial behaviour. Firstly researcher focused on understanding the antecedents of antisocial behaviour in adolescents. Secondly, we tried to understand the adolescents' perspectives on what they think are the consequences of antisocial behaviour, which are committed by him.

The finding of our study revealed that faulty parenting style, broken home or negative family environment leads to antisocial behavior in adolescents. In a study, it was found that adolescents who reside with a single parent exhibit more antisocial behavior

than others [12]. The study also reveals that peer pressure & peer group play a vital role in adolescent's antisocial behaviour. In a review study, the researcher concluded that prevention of negative peer pressure leads to decreased antisocial behaviour among adolescents [13]. The study also reported intimate relationships as a cause of antisocial behaviour in adolescents. A lot of research has revealed a robust association between Involvement in sexual activities and antisocial conduct [14, 15, 16, 17]. In a longitudinal study it was founded that adolescent's sexual involvement predicted antisocial behaviour [18]. As a cause of antisocial behaviour participants also reported that aggression & impulsivity and drug use play a key role in indulging antisocial activities. Longitudinal study shows that impulsivity is associated with a future increase in antisocial behavior [19]. Aggression has been linked to conduct problems and antisocial behaviour in adolescents and other population also [20, 21]. Drug use is a social and a public health problem that has been related to antisocial behaviour. Adolescents who commit antisocial behaviour tend to relate with drug users [22] and group pressure is known to be a strong determinant of drug use [23]. An Indian researcher Pooja and her colleague (2020) in their qualitative study founded that a complex relationship between drug addiction and adolescent's antisocial behaviour [24]. When adolescents committed antisocial behaviour, then he or she is not only suffer, along with him their families, and society also suffering from multiple consequences. But the objective of this study to focus on problems faced by adolescents only. The adolescent who commits a crime faces a problem that he or she is probably unable to predict. He may lose his or her freedom, loss his academic ground while being placed on observation home. The study revealed that adolescents who committed antisocial behaviour & placed in observation homes experienced varied consequences ranging from loneliness, negative self-concept, hopelessness about future life and low self-esteem. In a research, it was found that negative mental health is considered a leading cause of suicide among adolescents [25], especially among antisocial adolescents. The risk of suicide for juvenile offenders was nearly three times greater than the rate for the general population. Huizinga and his colleague (2000) revealed that among antisocial adolescents, 13–20% had persistent mental health problems [26]. Bohnstedt (1978) found in his study that when adolescents with antisocial behaviour were placed in observation homes resulted in increases feelings of loneliness, negative self-concept and also decreases self-esteem [27]. Riggs and his colleague (1995) found in a study that placement of adolescents in observation homes may cause depression symptoms [28], while Kashani et al. (1980) proposed that placement of adolescents in observation homes may cause significant depression in vulnerable people [29].

## V.CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to understand the subjective experiences of adolescents with antisocial behaviour. The result of this qualitative study revealed that faulty parenting style, broken home or negative family environment leads to antisocial behaviour in adolescents. The finding of the study also highlights the mental health problems like as loneliness, negative self-concept, hopelessness about future life and low self-esteem faced by adolescents placed in observation homes. In these situations, intervention programmes are necessary to stop antisocial behaviour incidences. These findings have implications for the drafting of policies and interventions to reduce antisocial behaviour.

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