



## A study of violent behaviour among students: its causes and correlates

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### Abstract

Good manners are the landmark of a person. When people deviate from the etiquettes there is imbalance caused in the equilibrium of the fabric of the society. It is also said that if we observe deviations, it is better to curb it in the bud before it magnifies.

Children are the future of tomorrow. Right kind of behaviours and attitude formed in them will ensure right kind of results in the society. Therefore there is a felt need to inculcate the same if it is not done and encourage the same. This research is a study of violent behavior depicted among students of St. Arnold's Central School, of upper primary section (Std. V-VII) in particular. This study probes into finding out the kinds of violent behavior prevalent among students with the help of teachers and peers. Later it probes into the causes of those violent behaviors among students and plausible solutions are suggested.

Twenty cases have been identified who show tendencies towards violence from among 240 students of upper primary section. These subjects have been identified with the help of teachers and peers and later confirmed with the opinions of the parents of the subjects. The subjects are observed and counseled over the period of 4 months. Later a test is administered to check the effect of observation and counseling on them.

**Keywords:** Violent behavior, causes & correlates

### Introduction

Human beings are always alive and active. This action takes place in the society affecting it in mostly two ways - positive and negative. The action positive action form an individual contributes to the positive societal development and the negative to the retardation of the society. Let us look at a couple of incidents.

March 11, 2019: A teacher in Rohini, Delhi is beaten up by a student when she catches him cheating in an exam.

Jan 30, 2012: A student of DPS, Gurgaon thrashes a security man for not letting him park in front of the gate.

The above incidents are aggressive behaviors of students in the school campuses. The Dictionary meaning of aggression is "the act of initiating hostilities or invasion, the practice or habit of launching attacks or hostile or destructive behavior or actions." Whenever the term *aggressive* is used to describe a student's behavior, images of physical injury to another automatically come to mind. Aggression is the most serious of inappropriate behaviours and the most serious consequences for both the students and those in his or her environment. Violent behavior is not a new phenomenon in the contemporary educational systems. It is manifested in the form of rioting, sexual violence, fighting and bullying. These destructive activities contribute to physical disabilities, drop out and poor academic performance

among students. For centuries, violence has been a commonplace feature of school life with its causes embedded in the social, cultural, historical and economic contexts of its time. (Leach, 2003). The focus of violence can be individual, objects or the school itself, and the nature of damage can be psychological, physical or material.

Homes provide an environment that shapes their behavior in one way or another. For instance, a 1994 national survey in suburban, urban and rural schools in the United States of America found that two major factors were held responsible for school violence: disintegration of family; and increased depiction of violence in the media and popular music. Aggression in young people is an important social issue. Children and youth who behave aggressively may harm not only themselves, but also their families, their communities and society at large.

Research shows us that children with more aggression problems are more likely than children without such problems to become teenagers who have problems with aggression, other mental health issues or substance use – and as adults they are more likely to engage in acts of violence.

The earlier a young person with an aggression problem is identified and receive help, the greater the chance that the chosen treatment will have lasting benefits.

It therefore becomes crucial to look into the history of violent behavior among students and ascertain whether this aggression and its dire consequences is something which can be avoided. Historical perspective on violent behavior among students / youngsters.

Although violent youngsters have increasingly become the objects of social concern, their medical histories have not often been systematically studied by social scientists. Historically, the psychiatric literature has usually considered violent children in terms of their psychology.

Some sociologists have theorized that children in lower socioeconomic strata got into trouble because they did not have access to the material things enjoyed by their middle class counterparts. Critics of these theories have countered that they were based on prejudiced assumptions, since arguably many poor people are not led by their circumstances to commit criminal, antisocial or violent acts.

New research focuses on the medical and environment factors present in the case histories of unusually violent children. Some of the findings suggest that the institutional treatment of violent children displays cultural biases.

For example, a 1980 study Dr. Lewis of 98 adolescents' delinquents in Connecticut found that race was a factor in deciding whether children were to be hospitalized for treatment or sent to correctional institutions.

Another study found that aggressive behavior in boys was likely to be treated as the deliberate acts of healthy youngsters and they were subsequently sent to correctional facilities. The same violent acts when performed by girls were often considered as psychologically aberrant and they more likely to be sent to hospitals for treatment. A study of homicidal behavior among a sample 55 children aged 3 to 12, suggests that such behavior is frequently associated with some or all of the following factors: the child has a very violent father, a history of psychomotor seizures and a history of suicidal behavior.

A 1979 study of 78 juvenile delinquents by Dr. Lewis, Dr. Pincus and their colleagues found that violent offenders had been subjected to an amount of abuse that was extreme, in some cases affecting their central nervous systems. The neurological impairment observed may have been caused by such abuse in some subjects and in others by preexisting conditions. These are three correlates that characterize the repeatedly violent child: neurological impairment, psychiatric symptoms and the history of having been abused.

It all comes down to whether you consider these children to be disturbed or criminal.

### Types of Violent behaviours

Children and youth pass through a number of developmental stages in which certain negative behaviors, including those involving aggression can be considered commonplace or "normal." But no matter how "normal" these behaviors are, they are not socially acceptable, and take many forms. Some types of aggression are listed below:

- Poking, pinching, pushing, shoving, spitting, tripping, hitting, kicking, throwing things and beatings.
- Insults and beatings

- Hidden activities that are more difficult to detect, such as lying, cheating, stealing and setting fires.
- Aggressive response to frustration, teasing or threats.
- Spreading gossips or rumours, manipulating friendships or excluding one person from a group.
- Sexual acts of any kind performed without the voluntary agreement of the other person
- Bullying, this is repeated aggressive behavior of any kind.

Violent behaviours refer to those behaviours – verbal, non verbal, or physical – that injure another indirectly or directly and / or result in extraneous gains for the aggressor. The students body language for all of these behavior is a stance that clearly communicates anger, rage, frustration, humiliations, and / feelings that motivate aggressive behavior.

In instance where verbal aggression is manifested, students will not always demonstrate the body language described (e.g., tattling), but the intent of the behavior is still clearly to hurt another person or to gain something for the aggressor. It is also important to keep in mind that even playful hits, kicks and punches and sarcastic statements are forms of aggressive behavior.

**1. Overaroused aggression:** Students engage in behavior that is characterized by high levels of activity that result in frequent accidents and aggressive incidents. Students who push and shove their peers often provoke or initiate an aggressive response from their peers.

**2. Impulsive aggression:** Students are generally quiet and passive in their demeanor but seemingly have a low tolerance for frustration. When frustrated, the student may burst into a flurry of activity and violence that can be uncharacteristically destructive.

**3. Affective Aggression:** Students demonstrate rageful aggression. Their behavior is described as appearing to be chronically angry, resentful, and hostile.

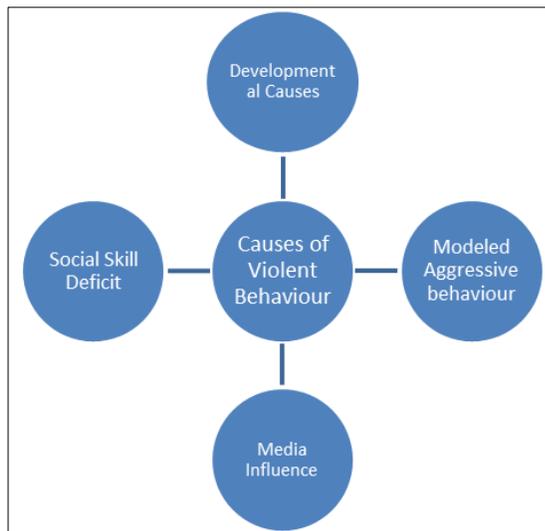
**4. Predatory aggression:** Students seems to be seeking revenge. Individuals who demonstrate predatory aggression are described as person who waits for a chance to get back another person in hurtful, harmful manner.

**5. Instrumental aggression:** Students act as the intimidating bully. Students who engage in instrumental aggression demonstrate behaviours that allow them to get their own way through intimidation of others.

Whatever the degree or nature of aggression, it becomes imperative for the society to ensure that such violent behavior is nipped in the bud to ensure the smooth and sensible growth of a young individual.

### Causes of violent behavior

There isn't a simple reason to explain why someone behaves aggressively. However we do know that there are characteristics of children, youth, their families and their environment that can either increase or decrease the likelihood that they will display aggressive behavior.



**Fig 1:** Causes of Violent Behaviour

**Need and Significance of the problem**

As a teacher educator, the researcher has noted an increase in violence among students in school as well as in colleges. A lack of discipline in a school creates an environment that can become violent and unsafe. One of the major concerns of the school and parent is that of discipline and value based education of the students. It is also noted that everyone agrees, namely teachers, parents and students themselves that violence is on increase. It disturbs the peace and major fabric of the society. Human being is a learning being compared to other animals. The traits, way of life is picked up from the surrounding in which the individual lives. The traits of life, norms etc. are set by the society for a peaceful co –existence. But this does not happen. The rules are broken and there is imbalance is caused. When the violent behaviors are learnt, interiorized at early life itself, it becomes a major concern to be looked into. So there is need to study and tackle this existing problem especially among students when they are young, so that when the right chord is stuck at the right moment the right music and harmony will follow. The researcher took up the study to delve into this issue to find out the kinds of violent behaviours that exists among students, the known causes for the same and later to find out plausible solution to curb this issue.

**Statement of the problem**

To study violent behaviors among students of Upper Primary and its causes and correlates.

**Operational Definitions of the Terms**

**Violent Behaviour:** Aggressive behavior observed among students in school, such as hitting, insulting, stealing, habits of immediate negative reactions, tit for tat attitude, etc.

**Upper Primary:** Students studying in std. V-VII

**Causes:** The sources from where the violent behaviours are picked up and the reasons for aggressive behaviours as mentioned by teachers, peers and parents.

**Correlates:** The other factors which are related to violent behaviours and the effects.

**Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To find out if there is violence prevalent among students.
- 2) To study the kind of violence that exists among students.
- 3) To study the causes that lead to violent behavior among students.
- 4) To study the effect of counseling on violent behaviors among students.
- 5) To study the plausible solutions to put an end to those violent behaviours.

**Hypotheses**

**H1:** The violence amongst the students in the upper primary school is high.

**H2:** The “hit back attitude”, intolerance /low tolerance, reactions at the spur of the moment, are the kinds of violence amongst the students of the upper primary school.

**H3:** The media (especially Television), peer groups, neighborhood influence and materialistic culture are the major causes of the violence amongst the students of upper primary school.

**H4:** The violent behavior among the students is low after counseling.

**H5:** The plausible solutions are conscientization, monitoring of children’s movements, firmness by teachers and parents regarding value systems and attractive value based programmes.

**Methodology of Study**

Case study method is used. The subjects is be identified by the teacher and peer groups. Further the cases are confirmed by taking opinion of their parents. The selected sample is further observed for the symptoms of violence. A questionnaire was given to them to know their inclinations. Interviews of cases was conducted. Opinions of the class teacher was taken. Meetings were conducted with teachers and peer group for providing remedies on violent behavior of the cases. The students were counseled at different level for a period of four - 4 months. Twenty (20) Students studying from std. V–VII at St. Arnold’s Central School Pune are selected as the sample by purposive sampling.

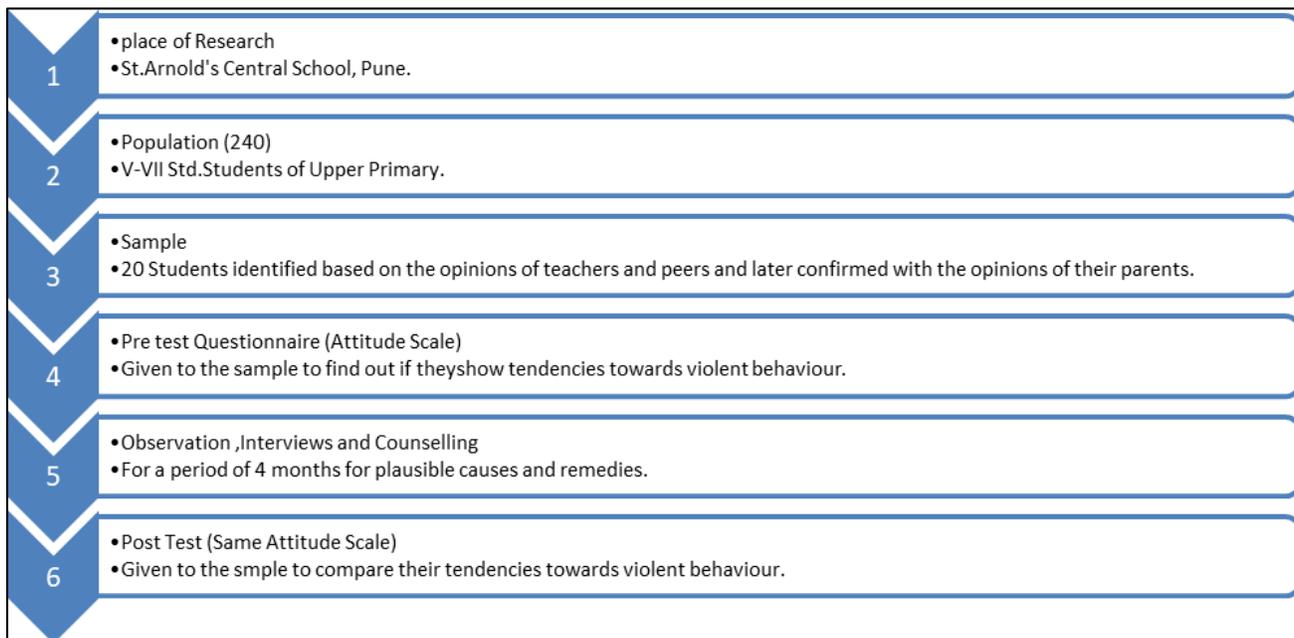


Fig 2: Pictorial diagram of the Methodology

### Testing of Hypothesis

**H1:** The violence amongst the students in the upper primary school is high.

To test this hypothesis views were taken from teachers and peers along with attitude scale towards violent behavior. It was found that there is violence among the students of the upper primary students because the mean value of violence scale is 168.25 which lies in the range of 139-171 which shows high violence amongst the students. Hypothesis is accepted.

**H2:** The “hit back attitude”, intolerance /low tolerance, reactions at the spur of the moment, are the kinds of violence amongst the students of the upper primary school.

To test this hypothesis, again the researcher depended on the opinion of teachers, peers and by interview schedule. The researcher also observed this violence over the period of counseling and observation. The sample themselves confessed about this attitude. It is inferred the students showed higher level violence by intolerance 14 cases (70%), followed by imitates heroes 14 cases (70%), physical fights 14 cases (70%) and destroy things 13 cases (65%). Hence the above hypothesis is partially accepted as the hit back attitude and low tolerance were amongst the major behaviours.

**H3:** The media (especially Television), peer groups, neighborhood influence and materialistic culture are the major causes of the violence amongst the students of upper primary school.

To test this hypothesis the researcher took out the percentage of causes of violent received from teachers, sample and their parents as follows: Family problems 18 cases (90%), Effects of media: 14 cases (70%), Stress 12 cases (60%). The above hypothesis is partially retained as the effect of media is second major cause (70%) followed by stress (60%), peers group influence (25%) and the neighborhood influence (20%).Hence the hypothesis is partially accepted.

**H4:** The violent behavior among the students is low after counseling.

To test this hypothesis the researcher administered a post –test (Attitude Scale). Scores of which were significantly lower. The calculated mean score of pre-test is 168.25(SD-8.49) & post-test is 108.75(5.80). The calculated t-value is 25.86 which is more than critical ratio i.e.0.25.Hence it is inferred that there is significant difference between mean. Hence it is inferred that the violent behavior is reduced after the counseling. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

**H5:** The plausible solutions are conscientization, monitoring of children’s movements, firmness by teachers and parents regarding value systems and attractive value based programmes.

The plausible solutions are conscientization, monitoring of children’s movements, firmness by teachers and parents regarding value systems and attractive value based programmes. To put this hypothesis to use, the researcher depended on the suggestions of teachers, peers, parents and literature which suggest similar suggestions.

### Suggestions: (Teachers)

**Watch for triggers:** Try and work out if there are triggers that regularly cause aggressive behavior. It can be as simple as children regularly arguing and becoming aggressive over what television program to watch, or such matters.

**Be careful how you react:** If you react to any problem by shouting or hitting out, children will learn from you that this is acceptable behaviour at stressful times. Therefore if they are in situations that they find frustrating they are likely to react in a similar aggressive manner.

**Discuss appropriate problems and in appropriate behavior:** If problems exist, immediately don’t jump to solve it in hast.

Wait until there is a period of calm and discuss the student's action with them in peaceful way. Explain to them the likely results of their actions.

**Give attention and show affection:** All children need attention and affection. This is especially true for children from nuclear families, broken families and single child. A feeling of rejection and isolation can find place in their life. Make time to pay them special attention.

**Monitor the influence of friends:** Pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal sociogram of the class. If for example a child sees their friends answering back to their parents or hitting other children, they may start to consider this as acceptable behavior, if you don't stop them.

**Give Warning time:** Most children get frustrated and can show aggression if they are busy playing and you suddenly tell them it is time to go. Although it is not always possible try to give them warning that it is nearly time to stop playing. This gives them the chance to get used to the idea and you are likely to get more positive response.

**Encouraging child to discuss problems:** The more you talk to a child the easier they will find their own vocabulary and be able to express their frustrations verbally. In quiet periods explain to your child how they can resolve their difference through discussion and negotiations rather than hitting out. Praise good behavior.

**Parents: Remember** that behavior change take time. It requires consistency and follows through. Avoid physical punishment, anger management, be good role model, eliminate underlying stress and anxieties, behavioural contracts and goal setting, avoid reinforcement of aggressive behavior, adopt a warm, supportive, assertive parenting style, teach your children appropriate behavioural skills and model these yourself.

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