



# Adolescent Violence: Proneness Factors of Victims

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Approximately three-quarters of adolescents experience some type of victimization, either in school or as a whole in society. Their mental acumen is not strong enough due to various reasons to resolve this age-related crisis and pushing them in a web of stress. The attitude of victim is influenced by his self-social image, personality and behavior which provide the space to the perpetrator of the offence.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional survey, using a pretested self-report questionnaire was conducted on 960 students aged 10–18 years of urban schools regarding the indulgence in violence as victims during the last one year.

**Observations:** The prevalence of victimization was 18.33% while in male and female it was 59.09% and 40.90% in their respective groups. Parents possessing education less than high school produce the highest numbers of victims. 65.34% victims were staying with both parents and 19.88%, 63.63%, 55.11% and 35.79% were in habit of smoking, alcohol and tobacco use respectively.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** Research studies have shown that the behavior can be modified and the proneness factors can be reduced or eliminated. Every child's individuality should be appreciated for the value, rather than suppressed to reduce the risk of victimization. Not all children are able to alter their personal characteristics that may place them at increased risk. To benefit the society, the segregation and counselling of such students at school level is the only answer of this problem.

**Keywords:** Adolescent violence, Victims, Proneness factors

## Introduction

Adolescent violence has increased several folds in the last few decades. Perhaps it may be due to the shift of the society from mechanical to digital. Hence, in 1993 it was declared as a leading public issue. WHO defines violence as: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation."<sup>1</sup> Approximately three-quarters of adolescents experience some types of victimization or the either in school or in society.<sup>2</sup> Victimized adolescents tend to be perceived as physically weaker and have fewer friends than those who are not victimized.<sup>3</sup>

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It has been observed that particular types of personalities are targeted. Bullying behavior tends to peak in early adolescence and to decrease in frequency as adolescence progresses. The attitude of victim is influenced by his self-social image, personality and behavior which provide the space to perpetrate. Their mental acumen is not strong enough due to any reason to resolve this age-related crisis and pushing them in a web of stress, which supports the 'storm and stress' concept of adolescent development. Adolescence is a time of turmoil and angst (anxiety and depression), really derives from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism and utilized in the developmental theories of psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup>

As per literature, the victims had lower self-esteem, increased rates of depression, suicidal ideation and loneliness.<sup>5</sup> Victimization has implications for academic success as well. Experiencing peer harassment has been associated with lower grades, disliking school and absenteeism.<sup>6</sup>

Under the umbrella of these facts, the present survey was designed to find out the proneness factors of victims at school level to correct their attitude.

## Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted by using an anonymous pretested self-report questionnaire. This was administered to 960 students aged 10–18 years of urban schools, which elicited details regarding the indulgence in violence as perpetrator during the last one year. The process was done in a sensitive and confidential manner. The involvement in physical violence done personally over the last one year was measured. The evaluation was performed on one-to-one basis.

All respondents were stressed at the time of questioning that they should respond 'Yes' only in the case of non-play situations. A two-point scale (Yes/No) was used to know the involvement in violence.

## Observations

The present study revealed the prevalence of victims was 18.33% while male and female were 59.09% and 40.90% in their respective groups. The upper-lower and lower-SES of nuclear families were involved the most. Parents possessing education less than high school produce the highest numbers of victims. 65.34% victims were staying with both parents and 19.88%, 63.63%, 55.11%, and 35.79% were in habit of smoking, alcohol

and tobacco use respectively. 57.95% victims had failed in the previous session and 55.11% watch TV more than 2 hours daily. The maximum victims was done in school (59.09%). 55.11% were victimized previously in one or other incidents.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The prevalence of violence was found 18.33%, which is low when compared to 53% found by Cross-Tab Marketing Services & Telecommunications Research Group for Microsoft Corporation,<sup>6</sup> 27% Ray,<sup>7</sup> 33% national CDC survey,<sup>8</sup> 32.8% MMWR Surveillance,<sup>8</sup> 26% Kowalski et al.,<sup>9</sup> and high when compared with 13.5% Sharma et al.,<sup>10</sup> 8% to 21% Deb et al.<sup>11</sup> and 15% to 25% adolescent involvement in violence depicted in Ziggy's Blogs.<sup>12-14</sup> WHO reported a steep rise in the homicidal violence, the rates are highest in Latin America (for example, 84.4 per 100 000 in Colombia and 50.2 per 100 000 in El Salvador) and lowest in Japan (0.4 per 100 000).<sup>15</sup>

Students of upper-lower and lower-SES, whose parents possess education less than high school and of the nuclear families reflect inclination towards violent acts due to poor family care and responsiveness as same was found in other studies.<sup>16-18</sup> Use of alcohol and smoking was lower than the results of other studies.<sup>10,12,19</sup> Tobacco use has not been reported in literature which is also one of the proneness factor found in our study. TV watching more than 2 hours per day is an interesting finding which indirectly correlates them in indulgence of violence as also has been advocated by other researchers.<sup>20</sup> Academic failure is one of the biggest proneness factors for indulgence in violence, which confirms the reports of Hurt et al. and others.<sup>12,21</sup> School was mainly selected as the place of assault. A large chunk of victims were victimized previously, which strengthened the serve-and-return theory of interaction.<sup>22</sup>

The proneness factors found in this study point a stress on the adolescents that reflects their unstable mental state which pushes them to indulge in such offences.<sup>23,24</sup> Research studies have shown that behavior can be decreased or even prevented if the proneness factors are reduced or eliminated.<sup>25</sup> Every child's individuality should be appreciated for the value, rather than suppressed to reduce the risk of victimization. Not all children are able to alter personal characteristics that may place them at increased risk. To benefit the society, the segregation and counselling of such students at school level is the only answer to this problem.<sup>26</sup>

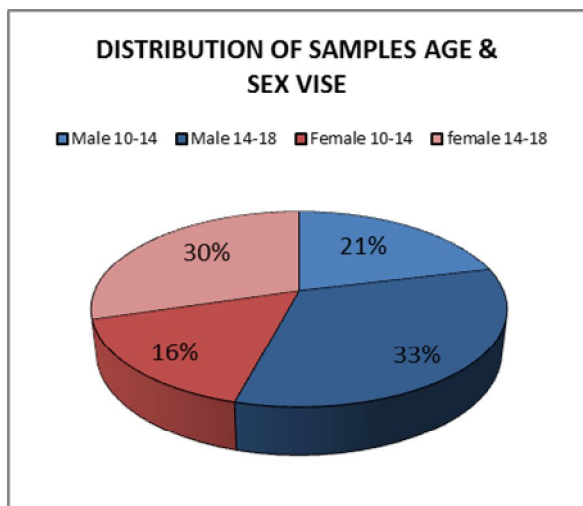


Figure 1.

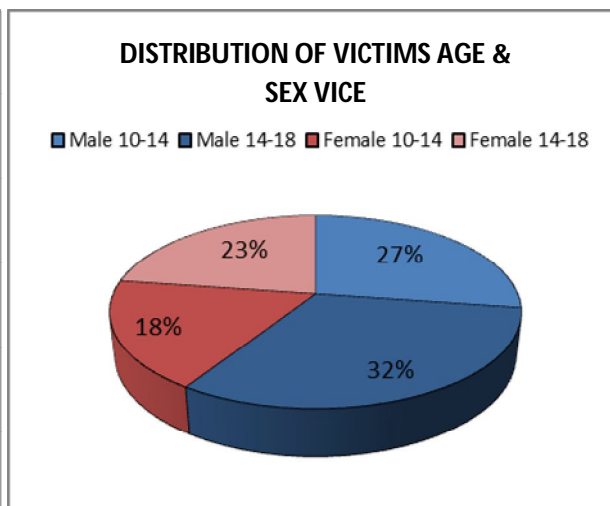


Figure 2.

Table 1.Socio-Economic Status (SES) of Victims

| SES          | n  | Percent |
|--------------|----|---------|
| Upper        | 16 | 9.09    |
| Upper-middle | 24 | 13.63   |
| Lower-middle | 16 | 9.09    |
| Upper-lower  | 72 | 40.90   |
| Lower        | 48 | 27.27   |

According to modified Kuppaswami Scale 2007 (n=176)

Table 2.Father's and Mother's Education Status of Victims

| Father's Education | n   | Percent | Mother's Education | n   | Percent |
|--------------------|-----|---------|--------------------|-----|---------|
| <High school       | 80  | 45.45   | <High school       | 128 | 72.72   |
| High school        | 72  | 40.90   | High school        | 24  | 13.63   |
| Graduate           | 16  | 9.09    | Graduate           | 16  | 9.09    |
| Postgraduate       | 8   | 4.54    | Postgraduate       | 8   | 4.54    |
| Total              | 176 |         | Total              | 176 |         |

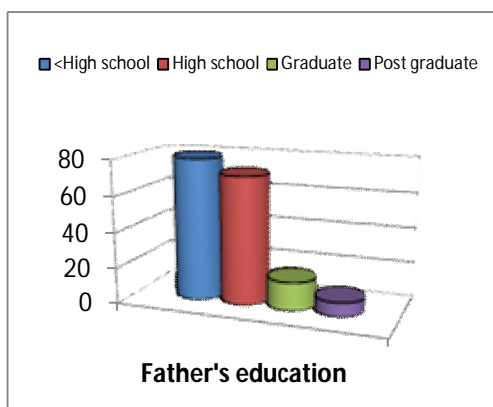


Figure 3.

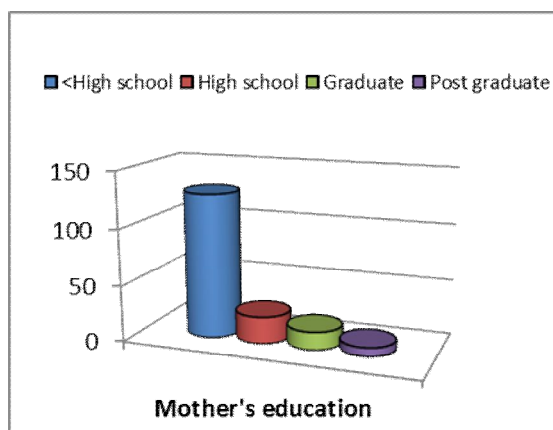


Figure 4.

Table 3.Habits of Victims

| Habits  | n=176 | Percent |
|---------|-------|---------|
| Smoking | 112   | 63.63   |
| Alcohol | 97    | 55.11   |
| Tobacco | 63    | 35.79   |

Table 4. Family Type of Victims

| Family Type | n   | %     |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| Nuclear     | 123 | 69.88 |
| Joint       | 53  | 30.11 |
| Total       | 176 |       |

Table 5. Staying with (Victims)

| Staying with  | n   | Percent |
|---------------|-----|---------|
| Both parents  | 115 | 65.34   |
| With father   | --  | --      |
| With mother   | 19  | 10.79   |
| With relative | 35  | 19.88   |
| Alone         | 7   | 3.97    |
| Total         | 176 |         |

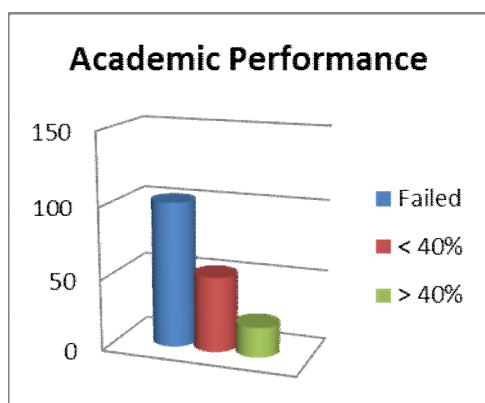


Figure 5.

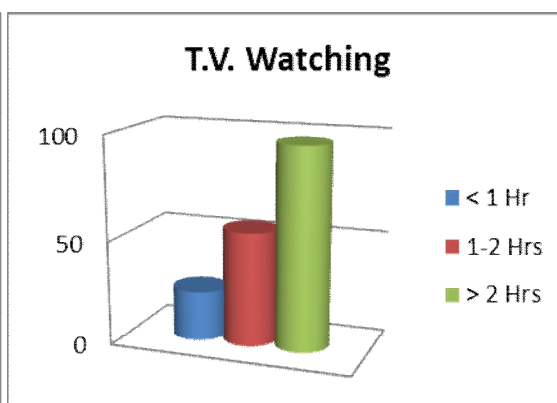


Figure 6.

Table 6. Place of Victimization

| Place of Assault | n   | Percent |
|------------------|-----|---------|
| Home             | 23  | 13.06   |
| School           | 104 | 59.09   |
| Neighborhood     | 49  | 27.84   |
| Total            | 176 |         |

Table 7. Before Assault whether Victim Had Been Victimized

| Before Assault whether You Had Been Victimized | n   | Percent |
|--|-----|---------|
| Yes  | 97  | 55.11   |
| No   | 56  | 31.81   |
| Don't remember                                 | 23  | 13.06   |
| Total  | 176 |         |

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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