

## CHAPTER - 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Adolescence**

Adolescence is the period from the beginning of sexual maturity (puberty) to the completion of physical growth (Hall, 1904).

The exact ages spanned by adolescence vary from one person to the next. The psychological impact of the transition to adolescence may differ across individuals and perhaps even across cultures. Adolescence is partly an upheaval, a disruption of peaceful growth. Adolescence represented no period of stress or crisis, but was instead an orderly developing of a set of slowly maturing interests and activities (Mead, 1928).

#### **Developmental Stages of Adolescents**

##### **Biological Development and Puberty**

The events of puberty mark the transition from child to adult. These events are triggered by a signal from the region of the brain known as the hypothalamus. The signal stimulates the pituitary gland which sends extra growth hormone throughout the body. Another result is the shift in the balance of sex – linked hormones in boys and girls. Boys have high levels of androgens and girls have high levels of estrogens and dramatic sex differences in bodily development begin.

Another hallmark of adolescence is a cluster of key changes in the primary sexual characteristics. Reproductive organs gradually increase in size for boys as penis. Secondary sexual characteristics for example body proportion, hair quality and distribution, voice take place.

In many countries, puberty in boys take place 2 years later than do girls. Malnutrition, disease and low body weight can delay physical development, including sexual maturation (Frisch, 1974).

##### **Cognitive Development**

Thinking abstractly take place at the age of 16. It is the ability to think in terms of the abstract concepts that link concrete objects or actions together (Galatin, 1980).

Hypothetical thinking helps the adolescents to judge the reasonableness of a purely hypothetical line of reasoning. Hypothetical and abstract thinking make sophisticated deduction and induction possible. Deduction is reasoning from abstract and inductive is the thinking from complementary process of observing a number of specific events. Interpropositional logic is the ability to judge whether propositions are logically connected to one another. Reflective thinking is the process of evaluating or testing one's own reasoning.

Moral judgment is deciding to do what is right or wrong (Colby, 1983). The kind of moral reasoning done by adolescents and adults is quite different from the child's moral reasoning

Achieving identity is a key task of adolescence. Seeking identity involves sense of what one's skills and personal attributes are, to discover where one is headed in life. Adolescents who fail to achieve a sense of identity may face confusion over what roles they can or should be playing in life. They may delay any commitment to adult roles (Erikson, 1968).

### **Social Development**

In family relationships, adolescents see themselves as adults. Most problems between parents and teen occur due to concern about timing of rights and responsibilities. Teenagers press for the freedom and privileges of true adulthood. As these occur, parents can expect less automatic obedience and more resistance. These are the signs of the adolescent's cognitive growth.

Boys conflicts with their parents tend to involve more objective issues of authority and privilege such as access to the family car. Boys relationship with father and mother appears to shift significantly during the time of puberty. Boys act more assertively to mothers (Steinberg, 1979).

Peer relationships assume more importance during adolescence than at any other period of life. Peer group can help in prosocial behaviour among adolescents. They can provide a refuge and a source of support for youngsters in conflict with their families. The structure of peer group changes over the course of adolescence (Coleman, 1980; Dunphy, 1963). Another structural feature of the adolescent peer group that changes during adolescence is the dominance hierarchy (Hartup, 1983). In

middle to later childhood, youngsters who are skillful in directing play and games emerge as leaders. With transition to early adolescence, the dominant youngsters are those with athletic and social skills and those who show the physical signs of puberty. In later adolescence, the leaders tend to be those bright, creative and well liked.

Adolescent sexuality involves dating at about age 15. Dating is also a proving ground for sexual values and behaviour. Studies have shown that more than two thirds of girls and more than three fourths of boys have had sex. This represents a major change (Sorenson, 1973: Kinsey, 1953).

### **Adjustment Problems in Adolescence**

Adolescence is a time of real vulnerability. Adolescents face problems such as loneliness and conflicts. Sexual activities increase during adolescence. Adolescent girls are unaware of the high risk period for conception. A majority of girls use contraceptive devices when they have had intercourse, but a majority of them did not at the time of first intercourse. They are likely to get pregnant when not using contraceptives for the first time. It has been seen that most cases end in abortion. This leads to economic disadvantages, an increase likelihood of child abuse and an increased risk of psychological problems in both mother and the child (Clarke and Koch, 1983).

Sexually active adolescents who manage to avoid pregnancy face risks of venereal disease. Adolescents who have multiple sexual partners are especially at risk. Illegal behaviour is defined broadly for adolescents. It includes both status offenses acts that are illegal only for minors. Drug use is common among adolescents. Delinquent youths who come from minority group families are more likely to commit crimes (Gold and Petronio, 1980).

Depression is another problem faced by adolescents. It is followed by feelings of guilt, a loss of interest in activities, sleep problems and even suicidal thoughts (Holinger, 1979). Another life threatening disorder is anorexia nervosa, a form of self starvation. Some adolescents have confusion of doing things and confusion of things around them. They feel that things are not real. This leads to delusions or hallucinations.

## **Issues Faced by Adolescents**

Teenagers face real problems on a daily basis during the most awkward growth stages of their lives; between 13 and 19-years-old. During this time, teens are exposed to some overwhelming external and internal struggles. Teens go through, and are expected to cope with hormonal changes, puberty, social and parental forces, work and school pressures, as well as encountering many conditions and problems. Teens feel overwhelmed when faced with unprecedented stresses concerning school and college, and career confusion situations. Those who have absentee parents are exposed to more unfavorable states of life. The issues that teenagers face today vary but these issues can be dealt with easily if parents and other guardians can understand the symptoms of their problems. Parents need to approach their children, who have been suffering from one or more teenage problems, carefully and in a friendly manner to discuss the problems. Many teens feel misunderstood. It is vital that their feelings and thoughts are validated and that the validation comes from their parents (Sha, 2013).

### **The Most Common Problems that Teenagers Face Today Include:**

- Self-Esteem and Body Image
- Stress
- Bullying
- Depression
- Cyber Addiction
- Drinking and Smoking
- Teen Pregnancy
- Underage Sex
- Child Abuse
- Peer-Pressure and Competition
- Eating Disorders (Sha, 2013)

Surprisingly, all of these problems are connected to one another, like a chain reaction. When the teens face self-esteem and body image problems, they can become frustrated, resulting in eating disorders. The teens start feeling stress when they are exposed to peer-pressure and competition at school, or child abuse at home. Many teens take to drinking and smoking in order to relieve the stress. Many may run away

from home, play computer games, and start chatting online with strangers. Computer games and online chatting can result in addiction. Many teens feel further stress when they get bullied online. Others may become easy targets of online predators and once treated badly, they turn to more harmful practices. Those who cannot find love at home or support at schools start to build relationships with friends in school or local areas, resulting in unsafe or underage sex, and possible teen pregnancy. Many become addicted to drugs and harm themselves when they cannot get results. Many teens resort to crimes once they feel they cannot get any help or support. However, the most common problems teenagers face today are described below:

### **Self-Esteem and Body image**

Teenagers undergo and have to cope with numerous body changes. Some teenagers feel too fat, too skinny, too tall, too short, etc. This feeling leads them to spend time wishing they were not too skinny, too short, their hair was not too curly or vice versa. The problem with this feeling is that it affects their self-image. As a teenage boy or girl's body changes, so does the self. When they do not like something in themselves, they have self-esteem and body image problems. They also perceive others, particularly schoolmates, to view them as they view themselves. They can suffer more from these problems when they have trouble adjusting (Sha, 2013).

Hormonal changes have huge effects on the general growth and mood of the teens. Puberty changes tempt teenagers to compare themselves with people around them and when they find they do not match their standards, they feel low. They also compare themselves with those seen on TV, in movies, and in the magazines. Most youths' ability to develop positive self-esteem is affected by family life and parental criticism. Teenagers who experience negative comments about their appearances, the way they talk, etc stuff also develop poor self-esteem and body image.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is one of the worst teenage problems and affects millions of youths. Bullying causes fear in the minds of kids, and makes them nervous going to school each day. The adults do not always witness the bullying in their lives. The teenage children may be subject to heavy bullying as they may not understand how extreme it can get. Any form of bullying is relentless, causing the affected teenagers to live in a state of constant fear. Two of the prime reasons teens are bullied are their appearance

and social status. Bullying has caused many serious and life threatening problems for bullied teens. As they get bullied often in school, their academics, and mental health suffer (Sha, 2013).

Bullying can be cruel when it becomes physical attacks on the victims. Some bullies attack their targets physically while others repeatedly spew verbal insults, affecting the psychology of the affected teens.

The latest edition of bullying is cyber bullying. It can get as worse as it gets in the real life experience of the teens. Cyber bullies use cruel instant messages, text messages, emails online, and voice messages in many cases. Bullying is a very offensive behaviour and crime. Bullying leads to more violent behaviour in the bullies in their adult years. They eventually get rejected by their peers, lose friendships and become depressed as they age. Parents, teachers, and people in should educate their teenagers about bullying and tell them to report any act of bullying to them. Media can also educate the teenage children about bullying when some teenagers are bullies (Sha, 2013).

### **Depression**

Depression is one of the worst problems that some teenagers suffer from and it can lead to more problems in the future. Depression may arise from poor self-esteem and body image problems. If that is the reason of depression in a teen, then parents should talk to the teen, listen to their child, comfort him or her, and accept their child for who they are. It is crucial that teens feel validated in their feelings and thoughts because what they are going through is a real part of their lives. Parents and guardians should not judge or criticize their feelings or thoughts. They should tell the teen how important it is to have high self-esteem and be comfortable in their body.

Depression symptoms in teenagers may be exhibited in various ways. Changes in sleep patterns, eating habits, declined interest in normal and healthy activities, dropping grades in school and college, and preferred isolation are all signs of depression. When teenagers exhibit one or all of these symptoms parents should intervene immediately. If teenagers begin talking about their depression, then they should be allowed to express their feelings, and parents should validate their feelings by listening to them without interrupting the conversation (Sha, 2013).

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

Youths, particularly those who are in their early teens who drink, put themselves at risks for many problems. For example, they face problems with the law, at school, with their parents, and peers. In the USA, drug abuse is a major problem affecting millions of teenagers, along with their parents and families. It is an imperative that parents, schools, media, etc, educate the young children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and how drugs affect their bodies. If they are taught properly, then they will be able to make an educated choice.

## **Cyber Addiction**

The Internet offers undeniable benefits in developing a teen's ability to grow with modern technology, technical ideas, knowledge and other skills. However, using the internet, particularly the social networking websites, unsafely puts the teenagers at very high risk for many problems. When children spend more than enough or agreeable time online they tend to be cyber addicts. As they spend more time on social networking, gaming, and other websites, particularly adult sites, they suffer from cyber addiction (Sha, 2013).

Cyber addiction can be just as harmful as addiction to drugs or drinking alcohol. Teenagers who spend unhealthy amounts of time on the Internet or online suffer from a condition recognized as Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD). Those who have IAD conditions may experience distress, withdrawal symptoms including obsessive thoughts, tremors, and other mental and physical problems. Cyber addiction impairs the quality of their lives. Parents should talk to their children and agree on a list of rules that clearly say when to use the internet, which sites they should visit and what safety measures they should follow. Teachers can also ensure safe browsing of the web at schools and colleges for teenage students (Sha, 2013).

Problems that teenagers are faced with today are multifarious but interrelated in many cases. One problem invites another, then to more problems. Parents, teachers and other guardians should be well aware of the problems that today's teenagers are facing and be prepared to eliminate the problems to their best abilities. The sad fact is, even in solid and stable family units, teenagers may face with uncertainly, confusion and wrong directions involving their lives. Those who have witnessed and

experienced broken homes, unsafe sex, alcohol, drug abuse, and bullying issues, show themselves differently in the community they live in. Proper parenting is vital, especially in the very formative years of the children, so that they can grow up with the manners and teachings taught by their parents ([Sha](#), 2013).

## **Aggression**

Behaviour directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment (Myers, 2010).

### **Types of Aggressive Behaviours**

Aggressive behaviours can be reactive or proactive. Reactive aggressive behaviours are unplanned and impulsive, and are usually a response to feelings of anger, fear, or a need to retaliate against someone. When Misha pushes Sarah she's demonstrating reactive behaviour. By comparison, proactive aggressive behaviours are calculated and planned actions that have some motive other than harming someone.

Bullying is a form of proactive aggressive behaviour.

Examples of aggressive behaviours include:

- Physical violence, such as biting, hitting, and kicking
- Verbal hostility, like sending threatening messages through emails, phone calls, or social media, or making threats against someone's life, shouting, and swearing
- Nonverbal intimidation, such as making threatening gestures, sending unwanted gifts, and sexual harassment
- Destruction of property, like breaking someone's computer, destroying someone's cell.

### **Biological and Social Causes of Aggression**

#### **Biological Influences**

Certain brain areas, when electrically stimulated, can increase aggressive behaviour in monkeys. The amygdala in humans is the brain structure which has been linked to aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour is genetically influenced: By

selective breeding, aggressive and passive strains of mice can be created. Blood chemistry can contribute to aggressive behaviour. Alcohol can contribute to aggressive behaviour by decreasing self-awareness (deindividuation factor), and decreasing the ability to accurately perceive the outcome of an aggressive act. Low blood sugar levels can boost aggressiveness (Lagerspetz, 1979).

### **Testosterone**

Males with high testosterone levels are more prone to delinquency, hard drug use, and aggressive responses when provoked.

### **Psychological Influences of Aggressive Behaviour**

The frustration-aggression theory (Dollard and Miller, 1939) : Frustration creates a motive for aggression. Fear of punishment or disapproval may cause the aggressive behaviour to be displaced against some other target, or oneself. However, the frustration-aggression theory overstated the link. Frustration that arises from an understandable cause does not necessarily lead to aggressive behaviour. (Burnstein and Worchel, 1962): Had a research confederate disrupt a subject groups problem solving task. If the disruption was blamed on a failing hearing aid, no aggression toward the confederate was observed. (Berkowitz, 1978, 1989) revised the frustration-aggression theory. His revised theory stated that frustration led to anger, and anger can sometimes lead to aggressive behaviour. Anger arises when a person who frustrates us could have chosen to act otherwise

### **Social Influences on Aggression**

Environmental cues can increase the likelihood or amplify aggressive behaviour. Subjects made angry by an insulting confederate gave more electric shocks when given the chance if a rifle and revolver were on a table nearby, than when badminton rackets were left on the table. Children who had just played with toy guns were more likely to knock down another child's blocks than children who had been playing with non-aggressive toys (Berkowitz, 1968).

### **Sources of Aggression**

Two main factors of aggression are attacks by others and frustration

## **Attack**

One of the most common sources of anger is an attack or intrusion by another person. People often respond to attack with retaliation. This response can produce an escalation of aggression. Domestic violence often breeds more domestic violence. Family violence involves not one aggressor and one victim but it can be a pattern of mutual violence. Attack provides retaliation and the violence escalates.

## **Frustration**

A second major source of anger is frustration. Frustration results from interfering with or blocking the attainment of goal. Frustration in turn may be beget aggression because aggression alleviates the negative emotions. Family life is a source of frustration. There is more family conflict in working class than in middle class families. Economic depressions produce frustration which affects everyone. Job related problems are also among the greatest sources of frustration and anger. Hot temperatures are also a cause for frustration.

## **Expectation of Retaliation**

Another factor that may contribute to aggression is the motivation to retaliate. Research shows that men who have been angered and who expect to be able to retaliate are more likely to remember negative information including negative information unrelated to the initial cause of their anger.

## **Competition**

Competitive circumstances are often the precursors to destructive patterns of anger, arguments and aggression. Situational cues to aggression may be especially important in eliciting aggression in people who are predisposed to it. Aggression may be easily primed by cues in the environment suggestive of aggression (Taylor and Peplau, 2005).

## **Symptoms of Anger and Aggression**

Aggression may associated with other symptoms that are determined by the underlying disorder or illness. Ailments that influence behaviour often also have psychological, cognitive, and physical symptoms. Some additional signs and symptoms may include:

- Anxiety
- Moodiness
- Agitation
- Disorientation or memory problems
- Depression or flat affect
- Trouble with concentration and attention
- Trouble thinking in an organized manner,
- Poor communication skills due to overt negative affect
- Trouble with language comprehension, writing or reading
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Hyper-arousal or acute awareness of the environment
- Personality fluctuations
- Impaired judgment and decision making
- Insomnia
- Social withdrawal
- Being a danger to yourself or others
- Threatening behaviour
- Alterations in mental status
- Confusion, disorientation, delirium, lethargy,
- Trauma, such as bone deformity, burns, scar tissue, eye or ear damage and other injuries

### **Effects of Aggression**

Aggression can be the result of numerous causes, some of them serious illnesses. Thus leaving aggression untreated can lead to serious complications and permanent physical, legal and psychological ramifications. Some of the potential complications those with serious aggressive tendencies are at risk for include:

- Difficulties interacting appropriately at work, in school, and in social environments
- Loss of a social network
- Troubled parent-child relationship
- School expulsion

- Unemployment
- Drug and alcohol use and abuse
- Drug overdose or alcohol poisoning
- Increased risk of injury
- Law violations and legal troubles
- Self-harm
- Suicide or violence

## **Theories of Aggression**

### **Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis**

Frustration–aggression hypothesis, otherwise known as the frustration–aggression–displacement theory, is a theory of aggression proposed by Dollard and Miller in 1939, and further developed by Miller and Barker in 1941 and Berkowitz in 1969. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. It attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence. The theory, developed by John Dollard and colleagues, says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target.

There are many examples of this. If a man is disrespected and humiliated at his work, but cannot respond to this for fear of losing his job, he may go home and take his anger and frustration out on his family. This theory is also used to explain riots and revolutions. Both are caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory (Bandura) posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. In addition to the observation of behaviour, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. The theory expands on traditional behavioural theories, in which behaviour is governed solely by

reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the learning individual.

Social learning theory integrated behavioural and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a comprehensive model that could account for the wide range of learning experiences that occur in the real world. Key tenets of social learning theory are as follows.

- Learning is not purely behavioural; rather, it is a *cognitive* process that takes place in a social context.
- Learning can occur by observing a behaviour *and* by observing the consequences of the behaviour (vicarious reinforcement).
- Learning involves observation, extraction of information from those observations, and making decisions about the performance of the behaviour (observational learning or modeling). Thus, learning can occur without an observable change in behaviour.
- Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.
- The learner is not a passive recipient of information. Cognition, environment, and behaviour all mutually influence each other (reciprocal determinism).
- Social learning theory draws heavily on the concept of modeling, or learning by observing a behaviour. Bandura outlined three types of modeling stimuli:
- Live model in which an actual person is demonstrating the desired behaviour
- Verbal instruction in which an individual describes the desired behaviour in detail and instructs the participant in how to engage in the behaviour
- Symbolic in which modeling occurs by means of the media, including movies, television, Internet, literature, and radio. Stimuli can be either real or fictional characters.

- Exactly what information is gleaned from observation is influenced by the type of model, as well as a series of cognitive and behavioural processes, including
- Attention: In order to learn, observers must attend to the modeled behaviour. Attention is impacted by characteristics of the observer (e.g., perceptual abilities, cognitive abilities, arousal, past performance) and characteristics of the behaviour or event (e.g., relevance, novelty, affective valence, and functional value).
- Retention: In order to reproduce an observed behaviour, observers must be able to remember features of the behaviour. Again, this process is influenced by observer characteristics (cognitive capabilities, cognitive rehearsal) and event characteristics (complexity).
- Reproduction: To reproduce a behaviour, the observer must organize responses in accordance with the model. Observer characteristics affecting reproduction include physical and cognitive capabilities and previous performance.
- Motivation: The decision to reproduce (or refrain from reproducing) an observed behaviour is dependent on the motivations and expectations of the observer, including anticipated consequences and internal standards.

An important factor in social learning theory is the concept of reciprocal determinism. This notion states that just as an individual's behaviour is influenced by the environment, the environment is also influenced by the individual's behaviour. In other words, a person's behaviour, environment, and personal qualities all reciprocally influence each other. For example, a child who plays violent video games will likely influence their peers to play as well, which then encourages the child to play more often. This could lead to the child becoming desensitized to violence, which in turn will likely affect the child's real life behaviours (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

## **General Aggression Model**

A modern theory of aggression suggesting that aggression is triggered by a wide range of input variables that influence arousal, affective states and cognitions. According to this theory, a chain of events that may ultimately lead to overt aggression can be initiated by two major types of input variables – factors relating to the current situation and factors relating to the people involved. Variables falling in the first category include frustration, some kind of provocation from another person, exposure to other people behaving aggressively and virtually anything that causes individuals to experience discomfort. Variables in the second category include traits that predispose some individuals towards aggression, certain attitudes and beliefs about violence. This theory states that these individual and situational variables lead to overt aggression through their impact on three basic processes: arousal, affective states and cognitions. Individuals who are repeatedly exposed to high levels of aggression directly may tend to become increasingly aggressive themselves. This theory is more complex than earlier theories of aggression (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

## **Management of Aggression**

- **Punishment and Retaliation**

Punishment and retaliation is not a simple way of reducing aggression. Frequent punishment for children being aggressive tends to more aggressiveness. Fear of punishment and retaliation seems to spark counter aggression. People who are attacked have a tendency to retaliate against their attackers.

- **Reducing Frustration and Attack**

Frustration and attack are major sources of anger. Aggression can be controlled by reducing its potential of occurring.

- **Learned Inhibitions**

One technique is helping people to control their own aggressive behaviour. Many factors affect the inhibition of aggression. Generalized learned inhibitions and cues bring inhibitions into play.

- **Distraction**

Distracting oneself can help control anger. Several studies have showed that rumination increases anger and distraction reduces anger.

- **Pain Cues**

These type of cues tells what kind of a situation a person is in – whether it calls for aggression or one that calls for inhibitions (Baron and Branscombe, 2008)

### **Strategies Used to Reduce Anger**

- **Looking again at the provoking situation from the perspective of others:** By taking the others point of view, the situation could be understood and the person may become tolerant.
- **Minimizing the importance of the situation:** Reinterpreting the situation in a way that is less bothersome help in reducing anger.
- **Fantasizing about getting even but not acting on it:** Fantasizing provides safety valve. In fantasizing, the person would not have to suffer consequences.
- **Relaxing:** By applying relaxation techniques , anger can be controlled and it helps in reducing reactions to anger (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

### **Prosocial Behaviour**

Actions by individuals that help others with no immediate benefit to the helper(Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

### **Empathy**

Prosocial behaviour involves empathy – the capacity to be able to experience others emotional states, feeling sympathetic toward them and taking their perspective (Baron and Branscommbe, 2008).

### **Altruism**

Helping behaviour that is beneficial to others but clearly requires self sacrifice. (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

The basic steps of helping are

- Noticing a person, event or situation that may require help
- Interpreting the event as one that requires help
- Assuming responsibility for helping
- Deciding on and implementing the form of helping (Baron and Branscombe, 2008)

### **Factors that Influence Pro-Social Behaviour**

- Cultural Difference
- Personality Variables
- Gender Differences
- Effects of Religion
- Rural-urban difference

### **Cultural Differences**

Altruism is expressed differently between individualistic and collectivistic societies. Children in the U.S. least likely to provide assistance compared with children in India, Kenya, Mexico, and Japan. Overall, prosocial behaviour is most evident among children whose culture requires it (e.g. where families are large and children help care for siblings and manage the household).

### **Personality Variables**

Appears to be personality differences in terms of prosocial behaviour, subjects who help have been found to be more socially oriented and more internal in terms of locus-of-control than subjects who do not help some have argued that there is an “altruistic personality” which is associated with higher internalized standards of justice and responsibility and greater empathy, self-control, and integrity (Taylor and Peplau, 2005).

### **Gender Differences**

Appear to be differences in empathy between genders women have been found to experience more vicarious affective responses than men, perhaps because men have traditionally been trained to suppress emotional displays, we might expect women to be more empathic.

## **Effects of Religion**

Research suggests that while individuals who believe that helping others is a religious duty are more likely to volunteer help, simply being “religious” in itself does not correlate well with helping behaviour or compassion for those in need.

## **Rural - Urban differences**

Overall, people living in urban environments are less likely to help than those in rural communities since urban persons cannot help everyone, intensity of urban stimuli (e.g. noise) and greater diversity in urban (Taylor and Peplau, 2005).

## **External and Internal Influences on Helping Behaviour**

### **Situational Factors that Enhance or Inhibit Helping**

#### **Helping the People Liked**

Research showed that people help family members, friends and relatives than strangers. Research also showed that people tend to help others who are similar to age, nationality. Similar values also results in a victim’s receiving help. Attractiveness also plays a role in helping. Physically attractive people tend to get more help than unattractive ones. People tend to help to those whom they have positive feelings.

#### **Exposure to Prosocial Models Increases Prosocial behaviour**

Helpful models in the media also contribute to the creation of a social norm that encourages prosocial behaviour.

## **Internal Factors**

### **Emotions and Prosocial behaviour**

Emotional states are determined by both internal and external factors. Good mood increases the tendency to help others while bad mood interfere helping. Research indicates that effects of emotions on prosocial behaviour can be more complicated.

#### **Positive emotions and Prosocial behaviour**

Research indicates that people tend to help when their mood has been elevated. Emotions are also influenced by environmental conditions. Pleasant fragrance in the air makes a person feel better and the results has been found to influence behaviour.

Certain specific circumstances can decrease the probability of responding in a prosocial way. People in a good mood tend to resist helping because it affects their mood.

### **Negative emotions and Prosocial behaviour**

People tend to resist help if in a bad mood. Research shows that people help in bad mood if the act generates positive feelings. A negative mood or emotion is more likely to increase prosocial behaviour if the negative feelings are not too intense, if the act of helping is interesting rather than dull and unrewarding (Baron and Branscombe, 2008).

### **Theories of Prosocial Behaviour**

#### **Social Exchange Theory**

This theory is a social psychological and sociological perspective that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. Social exchange theory posits that human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. The theory has roots in economics, psychology and sociology. Social exchange theory features many of the main assumptions found in rational choice theory and structuralism.

Social exchange theory views exchange as a social behaviour that may result in both economic and social outcomes. Social Exchange Theory has been generally analyzed by comparing human interactions with the marketplace. The study of the theory from the microeconomics perspective is attributed to Blau. Under his perspective every individual is trying to maximize his wins. Blau stated that once this concept is understood, it is possible to observe social exchanges everywhere, not only in market relations, but also in other social relations like friendship. Social exchange process brings satisfaction when people receive fair returns for their expenditures. The major difference between social and economic exchange is the nature of the exchange between parties. Neoclassic economic theory views the actor as dealing not with another actor but with a market and environmental parameters, such as market price. Unlike economic exchange, the elements of social exchange are quite varied and cannot be reduced to a single quantitative exchange rate. According to Stafford, social

exchanges involve a connection with another person; involve trust and not legal obligations; are more flexible; and rarely involve explicit bargaining (Homans, 1958).

### **Cost and rewards**

Simple social exchange models assume that rewards and costs drive relationship decisions. Both parties in a social exchange take responsibility for one another and depend on each other.

**Costs** are the elements of relational life that have negative value to a person, such as the effort put into a relationship and the negatives of a partner. (Costs can be time, money, effort etc.)

**Rewards** are the elements of a relationship that have positive value. (Rewards can be sense of acceptance, support, and companionship etc.)

As with everything dealing with the social exchange theory, it has as its outcome satisfaction and dependence of relationships. The social-exchange perspective argues that people calculate the overall worth of a particular relationship by subtracting its costs from the rewards it provides.  $Worth = Rewards - Costs$

If worth is a positive number, it is a positive relationship. On the contrary, a negative number indicates a negative relationship. The worth of a relationship influences its outcome, or whether people will continue with a relationship or terminate it. Positive relationships are expected to endure, whereas negative relationships will probably terminate. In a mutually beneficial exchange, each party supplies the wants of the other party at lower cost to self than the value of the resources the other party provides. In such a model, mutual relationship satisfaction ensures relationship stability.  $Outcome = Rewards - Costs$  (Homans, 1958).

### **Empathy - Altruism**

Empathy-altruism is a form of altruism based on feelings for others.

The social exchange theory states that altruism does not exist unless benefits outweigh the costs. C. Daniel Batson disagrees. He holds that people help others in need out of genuine concern for the well-being of the other person. The key ingredient to helping is "empathic concern". According to his 'empathy-altruism hypothesis', if you feel empathy towards another person you will help them, regardless of what you

can gain from it (1991). Relieving their suffering becomes the most important thing. Batson recognized that people sometimes helped out of selfish reasons. He and his team were interested in finding ways to distinguish between the motives. Students were asked to listen to tapes from a radio program. One of the interviews was with Carol. She talked about her bad car accident in which both of her legs were broken. She talked about her struggles and how behind she was becoming in class. Students who were listening to this particular interview were given a letter asking the student to share lecture notes and meet with her. The experimenters changed the level of empathy by telling one group to try to focus on how she was feeling (high empathy level). The other group did not need to be concerned with that (low empathy level). The experimenters also varied the cost of not helping. The high cost group was told that Carol would be in their same psychology class after returning to school. The low cost group believed she would finish the class at home. The results confirmed the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Those in the high empathy group were almost equally as likely to help her in either circumstance, while the low empathy group helped out of self-interest. Seeing her in class everyday made them feel guilty if they did not help (Batson and Toi, 1982).

### **Social Norms Theory**

The Social Norms Theory was first used to address student alcohol use patterns. As a result, the theory, and subsequently the social norms approach, is best known for its effectiveness in reducing alcohol consumption and alcohol-related injury in college students. The approach has also been used to address a wide range of public health topics including tobacco use, driving under the influence prevention, seat belt use, and more recently sexual assault prevention. The target population for social norms approaches tends to be college students, but has recently been used with younger student populations (i.e., high school).

This theory aims to understand the environment and interpersonal influences (such as peers) in order to change behaviour, which can be more effective than a focus on the individual to change behaviour. Peer influence, and the role it plays in individual decision-making around behaviours, is the primary focus of Social Norms Theory. Peer influences and normative beliefs are especially important when addressing behaviours in youth. Peer influences are affected more by perceived norms

rather than on the actual norm. The gap between perceived and actual is a misperception, and this forms the foundation for the social norms approach.

The Social Norms Theory posits that our behaviour is influenced by misperceptions of how our peers think and act. Overestimations of problem behaviour in our peers will cause us to increase our own problem behaviours; underestimations of problem behaviour in our peers will discourage us from engaging in the problematic behaviour. Accordingly, the theory states that correcting misperceptions of perceived norms will most likely result in a decrease in the problem behaviour or an increase in the desired behaviour (Perkins and Berkowitz, 1986).

### **Promoting and Enhancing Prosocial Behaviour in Adolescents**

Research suggests that the following three school wide approaches can promote pro-social behaviour in schools.

- **Train teachers to integrate values instruction into classroom management**

The classroom provides an excellent setting in which to practice social skills. For example, allowing students to participate in class decision making can promote understanding of democratic values, respect for others' opinions, and social responsibility. Encouraging cooperative behaviour by assigning academic tasks in the classroom to pairs or small groups of students may promote the students' ability to work together toward common goals. The Responsive Classroom, a program for K–8 classrooms developed by the Northeast Foundation for Children, emphasizes classroom organization and management strategies that foster helpful behaviour, responsibility, and motivation for learning. An evaluation of the Responsive Classroom's effects on students in one elementary school found that this approach positively affected students' pro-social skills as well as their academic achievement (Elliott, 1999).

- **Foster a caring community throughout the school**

Many adults inside the school, including teachers, school administrators, cafeteria workers, and school bus drivers, can model caring and respectful behaviour. Such programs as the Developmental Studies Center's Caring School Community aim to build a school wide sense of community and to strengthen students' connection with the school. The Caring School Community includes

multiple components, such as an in-class curriculum, pairing of older with younger students for tutoring and “buddy” activities, and parental involvement. Two separate evaluations of this program reported decreases in students' problem behaviours and increases in prosocial behaviour in the classroom, compared with schools not using the program (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps and Lewis, 2000; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, and Battistich, 1988).

- **Use positive discipline practices**

Threats, punishments, and extrinsic rewards might keep a lid on negative behaviour but will not necessarily promote prosocial behaviour. Schools can best encourage prosocial behaviour by using consistent positive disciplinary practices that include clear expectations, discussions, and modeling. Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, a program distributed by the U.S. Department of Education, is an example of this approach. The primary prevention component of this approach is teaching and encouraging expected prosocial behaviour among all students, across all school settings, and by all staff members. Research has shown that implementation of the program can improve students' behaviour and academic performance (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg, 2005; Metzler, Biglan, Rusby and Sprague, 2001).

### **Need for the Study**

According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, reported incidents of crime against women increased 6.4% during 2012, and a crime against a woman is committed every three minutes. In 2012, there were a total of 244,270 reported incidents of crime against women, while in 2011, there were 228,650 reported incidents. Of the women living in India, 7.5% live in West Bengal where 12.7% of the total reported crime against women occurs. Andhra Pradesh is home to 7.3% of India's female population and accounts for 11.5% of the total reported crimes against women (National Crime Records Bureau, 2013).

Sixty five percent of Indian men believe women should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together, and women sometimes deserve to be beaten. In January 2011, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)

Questionnaire reported that 24% of Indian men had committed sexual violence at some point during their lives (International Center for Research on Women, 2011).

Females have lower arrest rates than males for virtually all crime categories except prostitution. This is true in all countries for which data are available. It is true for all racial and ethnic groups, and for every historical period. In general, women constitute less than 20 percent of arrests for most crime categories. Hence it is obvious that men are perpetrators of crime (law.jrank.org, 2014).

Moments before Saket Court sentenced Nibhaya rape accused to death, Justice Leila Seth, the first woman judge of a high court in India guided New Delhi students on how sensitization about crime against women can start from a very early age. The society was going through one of its worst crises of aggression that often manifests itself through sexual assault and crime against women. Seth opined that aggression has to be tackled at its root and that will be possible only if you stop the culture of competition in the classroom. A child should not be encouraged to compete with his classmates because that means asking him to become aggressive. Instead, ask them to be creatively different and recognize their talents. According to Seth, value education classes in schools should focus on teaching kids to respect the Constitution and its Preamble. If this is routinely done, children would automatically strive to become good citizens (Times of India, 2013).

Physical aggression in children is a major public health problem. Not only is childhood physical aggression a precursor of the physical and mental health problems that will be visited on victims, but also aggressive children themselves are at higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse, accidents, violent crimes, depression, suicide attempts, spouse abuse, and neglectful and abusive parenting (Trembley et al., 2004). Research results revealed that aggressive behaviour measured one year predicted decreases in prosocial behaviour in the following year (Obsuth, Eisner, Malti and Ribeaud, 2015).

Prevention and intervention programmes for children at risk for aggressive behaviour problems frequently target the enhancement of prosocial skills with the goal to increase prosocial behaviours (Sheridan et al., 2011) and decrease aggression. Meta-analytic evidence suggests positive effects of life skills and social-emotional learning programmes on aggressive problem behaviour (Durlak et al., 2011). Recently, researchers have begun to examine the mechanisms of change (i.e.,

mediating variables) related to reductions in aggression. One meta-analysis (Dymnicki et al., 2011) identified social skills, social-cognitive processes, and classroom characteristics as mechanisms linked to small but significant reductions in overt aggression following universal school-based violence prevention programmes.

Past research has demonstrated the unique contribution of prosocial skills to adaptive child development and the positive impact of prosocial skills on peer relationships (Crick, 1996; Denham, 1986; Eisenberg et al., 2001). Interventions that specifically target prosocial skills have demonstrated short and longer-term positive impacts on social relationships; however, these are few (Bowers et al., 2000; Cashwell, Skinner and Smith, 2001).

The present action research is attempted towards helping the selected middle school boys reduce their aggression and enhance their prosocial behaviour.