

# Behavioural deviance and family climate among adolescents

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## Abstract

Behavioural deviances that consist of a range of deviant and anti-social behaviors such as substance use, self-harm, bullying, attacking others, stealing, delinquency, risky sexual behaviors etc. arise as matters of critical concern during the period of adolescence. Family, being the primary socializing agent play a crucial role in the early development of characteristics of adolescents. Family climate that encompasses interpersonal relationship between parents, parenting practices, communication patterns, emotional support, guidance etc. create significant impact on shaping adolescents' choices regarding various aspects of life. Positive family climate, that is characterized by healthy and open communication, care, love, effective monitoring, healthy autonomy etc. fosters a space of trust for adolescents, there by contributing towards the betterment of their physical, cognitive and emotional aspects. On the other hand, negative family climate that consists of harsh parenting practices, negligence, avoidant attitudes, abuse etc. leaves significant impacts on these young minds and result in developing a negative image on them. The adolescents continually exposed to such a parental background slowly end up accepting the negative images exposed on them and start inheriting these deviant traits in their behaviors. Mechanisms such as effective parental monitoring, communication, role modelling, parental warmth etc. are some of the ways of fostering a good familial climate. Diverse policies that provide mental health resources to families and provide them with parental education also contribute towards forming good familial spaces contributing to the behavioural outcomes of adolescents. Extensive research on this arena help develop a comprehensive approach that focuses on improving familial climate as well as addressing behavioural deviance among adolescents.

**Keywords :-** Adolescence, Adolescents, Behavioural deviances, Family climate, Anti-social

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## Introduction

Adolescence period marks significant physical, emotional and cognitive changes. Since the rapid changes during this period play a pivotal role in the early personality development of adolescents, it is important to provide adequate guidance and support to them in order to ensure progress and growth of a quality individual. However, adolescence stage is often susceptible to several risks of behavioural deviances that include anti-

social behaviors such as delinquency, aggression, threatening sexual behaviors, self-harm, substance abuse etc. The familial, social, education climate of an adolescent play immense role in leading these kinds of behaviors that deviate from the existing social norms.

Various individual-level and familial factors that consist of mental health problems, internal conflicts, harsh parenting, peer influence, temperament etc. influence in the formation of behavioural deviances among adolescents. Family climate that encompasses the overall atmosphere of a family including interpersonal relationships, and communication dynamics do play the most significant part in the character development of the early adolescence period. The factors such as compassion, cohesion, warmth, conflict resolution, support and care exhibited by the family climate help shape empathy and various social skills among adolescents contributing towards the progress of better individuals for a better society.

The research conducted by Pardini, Waller and Hawes (2015) discuss how certain parental characteristics and aspects such as early motherhood, single parenting, inter-parental conflicts, mental health problems, substance use, internalizing problems etc. contribute towards developing serious behavioural deviations among adolescents. Apart from that, parental practices such as lack of attachment or bonding, harsh parenting, avoidant attitude, harsh monitoring etc. also contribute to the formation of negative identity among adolescents, gradually leading them to develop behavioural deviations. Parents often serve as role models for their children. The mental health problems, actions and attitudes of parents that form the family climate therefore significantly influence in shaping behaviors and attitudes of the children. It is very important to construct prosocial behaviors in the family space to ensure children learn such actions from their parents and inherit these traits in developing their understanding about behaving in a social space.

Understanding the significance of parental practices and family space in shaping characteristics of adolescents bring the necessity to adopt to targeted strategies that ensure a positive family climate for the betterment of children. Policies that aim in supporting parents, educating them about effective parental practices as well as community services that help resolve the mental health challenges they undergo result in constructing a nurturing environment which help children learn the importance of various social qualities. Interventions that consider cultural and social diversity within the families also help educate families about the need to build a positive development space for the adolescents. Family, being the primary socializing agent of any adolescent plays significant part in sowing seeds of empathy, goodness, kindness and love in the young minds of this group. The family climate that promotes open and healthy discussions, develop a sense of trust, care and comfort definitely aid in building self-esteem of the child and provide support to them in choosing right values at the time of rapid changes, like adolescence. By delving into the intricate relationship between family climate and behavioural deviance will help form ways that prevent such deviant attitude in adolescents, thereby working towards a better society.

### **Literature Review**

Since adolescence is a period that subjects to diverse and rapid changes; physical, cognitive and emotional, it is important to have healthy and open familial space of communication that play an important part in helping adolescents take wise decisions for life. The aspects of familial climate have immense impacts in development of diverse characteristics during the early stage of adolescent development as children often look upon their parents as role models and try to imitate actions that they conduct. The current literature review on behavioural deviance and family climate among adolescents focus on how the familial environment impact in the formation of various behaviors of adolescents, thereby helping develop ways that ensure a nurturing climate for the progress of better individuals for a better society.

Hinnant, Erath and El-Sheikh (2016) in their study depict the interconnectedness between parenting, peer affiliation and behavioural deviances among adolescents, indicating how permissive or uninvolved parenting play significant role in developing several deviant behaviors among adolescents. In this study, 252 participants were involved and on analyzing the behavioural and sympathetic nervous system activity of these adolescents clearly mark the indirect affiliation of permissive parenting contributing to connection with deviant peers, slowly leading to delinquency behaviors. Wood, Dawe and Gullo (2013) on an empirical study

conducted in children of age 12-14 identify how lack of parent monitoring and supervision lead adolescents to substance use and other anti-social behaviors. The association of impulsivity, family environment and substance use among adolescents coherently indicate the necessity for effective parent monitoring, intervention and supervision.

Fosco, Stormshak and Dishion (2012) depict the significance of family monitoring and relationship in preventing and protecting the adolescents from developing various behavioral deviances such as substance use, delinquency etc. The research indicates how middle school years rise as a period of great risks where adolescents often tend to affiliate themselves with other deviant children. It is a mandatory requisite for parents to check upon adolescents often, foster an atmosphere of healthy conversation, build trust and healthy autonomy while effectively maintaining certain boundaries. The empirical study conducted by Fosco (2012) also supports the above statement by depicting how parent monitoring along with parent-youth connectedness help adolescents reduce their problematic behaviour over time.

Saladino, Mosca and Cabras (2020) in their research exhibit adolescence period as a stage of reconsideration of interpersonal relationships with parents. The study clearly depicts how negative family climate and negative expectations from others force adolescents to accept the negative image forecasted on to them, slowly pulling them to anti-social activities. The casual address of adolescents with negative terms and labelling them as criminals tend to develop delinquency behaviors in them, turning these adolescents into an anti-social identity, confining to deviant roles. Wang, Dishion and Willet (2011) emphasize how family management practices contribute towards shaping the early behavioural outcomes of adolescents. Lack of healthy and open communication between parents and children build a climate of tension for adolescents, making them scared to share their feelings to parents. These children finding their comfort in deviant peers and other deviant activities will slowly start developing criminal mentalities.

Buelga, Cava and Martinez (2017) conducted an empirical study analyzing family climate of 1062 adolescents from 12 to 18 years old. The primary objective of the research was to identify the differences in the family climate of these adolescents and to comprehend how these differences contributed in the formation of cyber bullying tendencies among the group. The findings of the study reveal that family climate that has severe conflicts lead to the formation of cyberbullies. On the other hand, cyber victims among the group share family climate of avoidant parents who do not propagate an open or healthy communication with their children. The fact that the family variables of avoidant and non-open communication result in gradual development of cyber bully-victim among the adolescents coherently indicate the immense role of family climate in creating behavioural deviances among the adolescents.

Study conducted by Halgunseth and Lippold (2013) depict that adolescents who are exposed to inconsistent discipline at their family climate often show tendency to accept nature of delinquency. The early expose to a climate of parental inconsistent discipline develops delinquency-oriented activities in the young minds of adolescents paving way to the development of further anti-social behaviour in the future. The research conducted by Pardini, Waller and Hawes (2015) put forward that a number of aspects such as early motherhood, family size, single parenthood, characteristics of parents such as substance use, internalizing problems, inter-parental conflict etc. create significant impacts on childhood conduct and progress of behavioural deviations. Moreover, problems in parent practicing such as parent attachment or bonding, harsh parenting, monitoring, failure in providing parental warmth etc. also led to youth anti-social behaviors. The study conducted by Hong, Kim and Piquero (2017) discusses how children who are abused at home have higher tendencies to turn out as bullies or bully-victims. Within that context, all of these research studies clearly indicate the intricate relationship played between family climate and behavioural deviances.

This complex interconnection between behavioural deviances and family climate necessitates the requirement for effective intervention and monitoring in identifying familial problems and thereby prevent children from adapting or developing behavioural deviances. Researchers like Williams (2015) and Krauss (2020) propagate various approaches to build a fostering parental relationship, family climate as well as peer climate that nurtures adolescents, providing them with adequate support, care and confidence. The study

conducted by Krauss and Robins (2020) also put forward the ability of positive family climate in the advancement of self-esteem among adolescents contributing towards their progress as quality individuals catering to the benefits of the society. Various policies thus aim in fostering an environment of positive familial space that encompasses open communication and healthy monitoring thereby working towards a positive development space for the adolescents. The existing literature review hence provides a comprehensive understanding on how negative family climate contributes towards developing behavioural deviations and depict the significance for extensive research on the arena to develop ways that help build a fostering parental environment, aiming early guidance of adolescents. Continuing research on this arena also help redefine and reconstruct intervention strategies, helping adolescents choose values and wise decisions and thus empowering them to navigate various challenges of adolescence effectively.

## **Conclusions**

Family unit stands as the pivotal arena that acts as the primary socializing agent, contributing to the early development of various characteristics among adolescents. The atmosphere of family significantly influences in the development of adolescents' attitude towards diverse aspects of life. Negative familial climate that has several conflicts, disputes and parental spaces which depict inter-parental conflicts, mental health problems, history of substance use, attachment issues, harsh parenting style etc. influences adolescents in a negative way creating negative expectations for them. Slowly adolescents start accepting negative expectations projected on to them, inheriting these characters as part of their identity and start accepting various deviant characteristics. The behavioural deviances found in adolescents such as risky sexual behaviors, substance use, bullying, self-harm, attacking others, delinquency etc. have direct or indirect relation with their familial history. Familial space that practice harsh monitoring or completely avoidant parents fail to meet the needs of adolescents at their crucial stage, lack in providing adequate care and comfort to them as well as fail in guiding them towards good values and actions eventually leading these children develop tendencies of anti-social behaviors. It is important to effectively intervene and facilitate spaces of open and healthy discussions for the children while maintaining healthy autonomy such that they are able to make better choices for them. Extensive research is required on this arena in order to explore how familial climate leads to behavioural deviances as well as to find effective ways to improve the conditions of difficult families, there by building a positive development space for adolescents.

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