



# ज्ञानविधि

कला, मानविकी और सामाजिक विज्ञान की सहकर्मी-समीक्षित, मूल्यांकित, त्रैमासिक शोध पत्रिका

ISSN : 3048-4537(Online)

3049-2327(Print)

IIFS Impact Factor-2.25

Vol.-2; Issue-4 (Oct.-Dec.) 2025

Page No.- 392-398

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<https://journal.gyanvidha.com>

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## PEER GROUP PRESSURE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: IN URBAN ADOLESCENTS

**ABSTRACT :** Adolescence is a transitional period, where an individual transition from a child to an adult. During this period, adolescent teenagers are highly prone to experience peer pressure in them schools. The types of peer pressure individuals' face in society today are vastly different when compared to records a few years ago. Peer pressure is a powerful social construct as it has the ability to influence an individual from what to wear, say, do or wheatear or not to engage in deviant behavior. Peer pressure is an important aspect of society and if academic professionals understand the trends of negative peer pressure, they can prevent an individual from falling into deviant behavior.

This research aims to find the correlation between peer pressure and the effects it has on a student's academic performance. Qualitative as well as quantitative methods were used to carry out this research. Questionnaire surveys were passed on a target population of 50 students out of which 39 took the survey. Alongside personal interviews were also conducted. This research is also a review of existing literature on positive and negative peer pressure.

**INTRODUCTION :** Peer play an important role in the social and emotional development of adolescent. At an early age and increasing through adolescent

friends begins to influence, its natural and important impact in teenage. In adolescent, they often bow to friends pressure because want to be blend in. They wish to be alike them and they may be excluded or ridicule of it if they don't stand together with for group. An adolescent can experience peer pressure in different degrees. Sometimes their friends proactively affect them to behave in certain ways and at other times they can just following along. Both of these circumstances are based on seeking approval, but it may be a possible for peer pressure to be consequence of bullying, this is when a adolescent fears being teased or physically hurt for not accepting. This may result in the individual incorporating the ideology of their associates, which may lead to them changing their behavior, way of life and daily practices to the ability to "fit in. Every individual that transitions into an adult is looked at with the obstruction of "fitting in" in society, especially the youth which is attending schools and universities. This illustration plays a monumental part on the emotional and easily influenced developmental regions of an individuals and definitely influences their academic way of life.

**PEER PRESSURE IN URBAN ADOLESCENCE :** A study had done by the Indian council of medical research in 2022, declared that just about 76 percent adolescence disclosed to making life changing settlement due to friends pressure, beside it social media as a digital platform expand this type of influence, 57 percent's of adolescence reporting it as a significant source of friends comparison. Peer pressure in India is a wide and unspoken reality of present time. Sometime it may be positively influence but it may have negative effect on adolescent's physical and mental well-being. Some positive effects are as follow-

1. Sometimes friends perusing to study harder to do better for grade.
2. Positive friends influences inspire for constructive outcomes, motivate to do well in life.
3. Positive Peer influence offer moral support to speak against cheating, bullies and other misleading activities.

On the other side negative peer influence perusing to do something vicious for themselves or others that are as follow-

1. Persuade peer to bunk the class and destruct to study.
2. Encouraging friends to bully someone's choices and fighting unnecessary.
3. Negative peer pressure misleading to bad habits like cheating and stealing etc.
4. Persuade peer to disagreeable act like alcohol and drug.
5. Negative impact to peer pressure using internet for misleading activities such as sex related and other risky behaviors.

**REASONS OF PEERS INFLUENCE IN URBAN ADOLESCENCE :** As we know human being is a social animal, he wants to be fit in same age group and he has a need of companion

alike him/her. In order to feel safe and shielding a person need someone who are same age group or same social traits. Those factors make influence to adolescence by peers. There are some reasons of peer influence from scientific to social-

1. There is a developmental changes in teenage brain, they are ready to engage in risky behavior because they unable to understand the results of their actions.
2. In teenage person seek to establish their identities for that there is a desire for social acceptance anyhow, even in pressure confirm to social traits and engage in social and popular accepted behaviors.
3. Many teenagers have lack of self-confidence and insecurity, their willingness to engage in social behaviors.
4. Sometimes boosting their popularity and self-esteem peers influence.
5. In teenage fear of judgment and embarrassment lead to peer pressure.
6. Adolescence have fear of being criticized and rejected.

**IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE IN ADOLESCENCE :** Impact of peers in adolescent may be negative or positive both, its depend on the influential group that belonging to.

**POSITIVE IMPACT :** There are some positive impact of peers that help them to encourage to do something good and positive for personal growth-

1. **Improve sense of affinity-** Adolescent is a very sensitive age, in this age if friends or peers help in studies, pushing in doing better task and motivate, that help to create a sense of affinity in peers. Which support in personality development and shape trust for society.
2. **Motivate and Encourage -** Most of teenagers are bewildered but wants to do something new or explorations, here friends can be great supporters. Friend help and motivate try out new things, encourage to learn new hobbies and skills. One of the most impact that we see due to peers will get out of comfort zone and motivate to personal growth.
3. **Peers enhance self-assurance -** In adolescence peers mostly try to somethings challenging, so when they impact positively helps in enhancing self esteem. In this stage peers always try to bring out challenges to each other, that boost self assurance because they realize strength.
4. **Peers build-up good habits and positive attitude -** Friend or peers have a big impact on school days. In this age group when they impact positive way inspires to learn and build up good habits for the future. Peers can build up and support for the positive mindset to look life. Peers are almost same age group and have same goals as they reinforce positive attitude and good habits.

**NEGATIVE IMPACT :** Friend or peers might impact negative ways that are following-

1. **Adverse impact on grades** - In adolescent belong to peer groups and try to fit in with the wrong one. Teenagers even if capable to scoring good marks in class, he or she still choose away to study because of friends, they making study uncool. So under friends pressure don't want to bully or try to be like other member of peer group, lead to negative impact on the grades of adolescence.
2. **A dip in self-confidence**- Negative impact of pressure lead to normal confident child to be insecure and start self-doubting. Teenager wants to be fit in with the peers but unable to do so steering the low self esteem and lack of self-reliance in skill might affect teenagers well-being.
3. **Lead to Harmful Habits** - An adolescence want to be part of peers group, consequently he or she might loss individuality. They have to adopt habits that would never have as drinking, smoking, use drug, stealing, cheating and skip classes etc. Such dangerous habits might be addicted to teenagers. At this point, long term consequences don't matter to teenager as long as feel accepted by their friends.
4. **Negative Impact on Mental wellness** - Teenage is the stage of brain development vulnerable to negative impact of friends. The pressure to fit in with peers may lead to anxiety, low self-respect and self doubt, kicked in increasing mental health issues such as anxiety disorder, depression and eating disorders. These issues of mental health might be persist into adulthood.
5. **Substance abuse and Risky Behaviour** - Peer pressure at the age of teens can lead to engage in various risky behaviour including substance abuse. In a study the American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry disclosed that due to peer pressure the majority of teens involve in substance abuse such as drugs or alcohol. In adolescence desire to fit and acceptance every challenge can override their better decision and leading to experiment with substances abuse. The repercussions of substance abuse can effects on teens mental health and emotional well being. In teenage for seeking social approval, they involve in risky behaviors as inappropriate online sexual activities, cyberbully and harmful online challenges etc.

In India 86% of High School students staggering, exerts a significance influence of peer pressure while on the other hand the pressure expand to risky behaviour, 74% of teens have experimented with substance because of peer pressure.

**SUGGESTION TO MANAGE PEER PRESSURE :** It's a big challenge for teenagers to deal with peer pressure. Parents can help teenagers to manage peers pressure or influence. There are some suggestions for parents to help teens to manage peers pressure or influence -:

1. Teach coping skills to Teenagers - To manage this pressure parents can play a significant role, by teaching teenagers coping skills. Learn them how to getting balance between being yourself and adjust or coordinate with your friends. By teaching them different technique to handle unlike situations and make them feel more confident and empowered in making decisions.
2. Honest and open communication - Parents should be encourage their teens for honest and open communication with them. Parents should do this by staying connected with their child, by this way they can feel free and talk to their parents when they feel pressure. Parents may create a safe and easygoing atmosphere where they can share their experiences and concern related to friends pressure.
3. Parents teach how to say 'NO' - Parents should teach their teens to setting your personal boundaries, its importance. and the way to say no, understand them that it's doesn't matter to say no if you don't want to do. Parents should teach them prioritize themselves for their own well being.
4. Teach problem solving skill - Parents should teach techniques to their teens to solving problem. There are some techniques as brainstorming solution, analyzing the repercussions of their actions and considering pros and cons sides. All these may help teens to make more wise decisions during peer pressure.

**METHODOLOGY :** This research was conducted using quantitative research techniques and using existing data from different researchers. A questionnaire survey which consisted of fifteen questions. The target population was made up of students who are currently enrolled in Forman Christian College. A total of 72 students took the survey, which was made on google forms. The survey was passed onto students using groups made on WhatsApp and other social media applications. The survey consisted close ended questions which has three possible answers, "yes", "no" and "maybe". The questions were based on the student's GPA and their peer groups. The questions were more focused around the individuals peer group and how their peer group influences the individuals behavior and what kind of effect their social group has on their academics. Is it negative or Positive?

**DISCUSSION :** The examination above shows that 45% of students agree that their peers perform exceptionally well in their academics, whilst 25% and 35% of the students who took the survey strongly disagree and are not sure that their fellow peers perform well in their academic examination. 66.4% of the respondents answered 'yes' when asked if their peer group effect their academics positively while, 6.7% answered no and 26.6% answered maybe. When asked if their peer groups encourage them to do well in their academics, 66.5 % answered yes while 26.4% answered no, which can be

seen as a negative influence on an individual's academic lifestyle. 27.2% of the students said 'yes' when asked if their peer group looks down or bullies' students with higher grade point average, while 46.0% said no. 26.6% and 28.9% of the students answered yes and maybe, respectively, when asked if the members of the peer group are involved in any kind of drug activity and if it has had an influence on them. 33.6% and 17.8% of the students answered yes and maybe when they were asked if they had to alter their behavior in order to fit in their desired peer group. When asked if they are easily influenced by their peers a shocking rate of 44.1% and 16.9% said yes and maybe. 38.4% and 17.5% of the students answered yes and maybe when asked if their peers make fun of them when they refuse to indulge in activities which they are not comfortable doing.

In Maslow (1954) theory of a hierarchy of needs he showed the need for belongingness and love as a step towards attainment in his hierarchy of motivation model. From his point of view deprivation of any basic human needs can hinder the progress towards achievement. According to Maslow's model, an individual should first have his issues of love and belongingness settled before addressing his needs of achievement. For example, an adolescent teen who has deprived relationship concerns from his family will not participate in the classroom when compared to a student who has the need for love and belongingness fulfilled.

The foundation of the ability to learn is based on comfortable relationships with other, including peers and family members, and classroom learning is based around the idea of learning with and in the presence of others. When looking at the empirical evidence that has been put forward, a relationship between peer relationship and their influence on academics can be seen (Ladd, 1990; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman 1996). NAEP (1998) conducted the research in which they asked the most intriguing question to see the effects of peers on academic achievement. The survey asked a young adult to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'My friends make fun of people who try to do well in school.' This question is important when measuring the impact of peer pressure on academic achievement.

**CONCLUSION :** The aim of this study was to find out if there is any form of correlation between peer group influence or pressure and a student's academic performance. The research hypothesis was tested and literature was reviewed which was related to the topic of investigation. Questionnaires and usage of existing data were the instruments that were used to test the hypothesis, which have been analyzed above. The results of this research lead to show that peer pressure forms the main foundation

of adolescent kids to learn empirical knowledge about their physical and social environment as well as accretion of skills and the attitude needed for the achievement for a better future. Peer group influence also has a significant relationship with an individual's academic performance. If an individual's peers are into negative activities such as drug abuse, skipping out on classes and being chronically absent from school just to engage in time wasteful activities, these attributes of an individual's peer group is likely to effect his/her academic performance.

An adolescence is a brain growing stage, prefrontal cortex in the brain develops during adolescence responsible for decision making. In this stage teenagers are mostly engage in risky behaviour because they are unable to understand the repercussions of their activity. To establish their identities and attain social acceptance teenagers face peers pressure. Peer pressure in adolescence may be positive or negative, positive impact can teach them many things which parents and teacher cannot, later one being more worrisome. It's impact on mental and physical health sometimes peer pressure can affect on academic performance. Parents and teachers can play a significant role to overcome adverse impact of peer pressure. Parents and teachers should encourage teens, provide safe environment discuss and listen to them without passing judgment. Consequently teens learn constructive coping, they regain self-esteem and confidence to manage peers pressure as well as stronger bonds with friends.

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