



Influence of Socio Demographic Variables on Violent Behaviour Among Youth

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ABSTRACT The objective of the study was to determine the socio demographic variables that might influence violent behaviour among youth. A sample of 1,205 youth aged 18-22 years were recruited using simple random sampling from the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu state. The Youth Risk Behaviour Scale was administered to assess the violent behaviour. The linear regression analysis showed age, gender and mothers' occupation to be the significant determinants of violent behaviour among youth. Also, youth between 18-19 years revealed a higher mean score when compared to 20-22 years and males showed higher risk for violence behaviour than females. The findings throw light on the socio demographic conditions, which is a major indicator of health, development and wellbeing of the individuals, and has its role in influencing violent behaviour among youth.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation (2020) describes "youth violence" as a universal public health problem ranging from bullying and physical fighting to more severe sexual and physical assault to homicide. Youth are defined as those aged 15-29 where one gets the freedom and is engaged to do a lot of things. They are living in a society with varying social spheres impacting their belief, attitudes and behaviour and where the impact of risk behaviour can be seen as being reckless. "A large proportion of violent, aggressive and antisocial behaviours emerge during adolescence and young adulthood" (Micciolo et al. 2022). Youth violence, increasing all over the world, has become a critical issue both socially and psychologically. Hence extensive public concern about youth violence remains. "Violence by youth is a serious collective concern" (Welsh 2008; Andrews and Bonta 2010). High-risk health behaviours in youth such as consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drug use, early onset of sexual behaviour, STDs, and early parenthood have been associated with violence. Youth violence is linked to negative health and well-being outcomes and disproportionately impacts communities. Violence increases the risk for behavioural and mental health difficulties, which includes future violence perpetration and victimisation, smoking, substance use,

obesity, high-risk sexual behavior, depression, academic difficulties, school dropout, and suicide (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention 2022). Worldwide an estimated 200,000 homicides occur among youth aged 10-29 years each year, making it the fourth foremost cause of death among young people. Physical fighting and bullying are common among young people where a study of 40 developing countries showed that an average of 42 percent of boys and 37 percent of girls were exposed to bullying. Youth homicide and non-fatal violence not only contribute critically to the global burden of premature death, injury and disability, but also have a severe, often lifelong impact on a person's psychological and social functioning. Youth violence also increases the costs of health, welfare and criminal justice services, reduces productivity, and decreases the value of property (World Health Organisation 2020). "Although it often occurs between acquaintances and strangers in community settings, it can also involve domestic abuse, whether physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial" (Russell 2021). "Violence in education settings like schools causes serious harm to children and adolescents that can last into adulthood. Violence in schools has a negative impact on the school environment by creating an atmosphere of anxiety, fear and insecurity, and it can violate the rights of students, including their right to education and to health. Schools do

not exist in social isolation from the communities, and violence at home or within the community can affect students in school, and may be replicated in schools” (Golshiri et al. 2018). A number of school-related difficulties and problems have been associated to violence among youth, which includes low interest in education, low levels of educational achievement and attainment, poor school quality and dropout. Even more widespread effects have been found on mental health and psychosocial well-being. “Assaults involving the youths add significantly to the global burden of morbidity and premature mortality” (World Health Organisation 2018). The socio demographic variables can function at the individual level like age, gender, poor academic ability, substance misuse, at familial level such as poor parental supervision, low socioeconomic status of family, and at societal level with urbanisation and poor social capital. Violence can also take many forms in physical, sexual or emotional and varies in its severity. Gender discrimination, norms and practices mean that adolescent girls are likely to experience certain forms of violence, such as sexual violence, at much higher rates than boys. This may further predispose the adolescents to the brim of developing mental health problems like depression, which is of utmost importance to be addressed by primary care physicians. Globally, 1 in 10 girls under the age of 20 years reports experiencing sexual violence (World Health Organisation 2018). Not all adolescents are at risk for violence perpetration, and one’s developmental outcome is an interplay of both individual characteristics and environmental risk factors. Several socio demographic factors have been found to put adolescents at risk for violence. Research showed that for adolescents from communities of lower socioeconomic status, the majority have encountered violence at home, in school, and in the community (Kaminer et al. 2013). Male adolescents are more likely than their female counterparts to encounter violence victimisation in school and community (Sui et al. 2018), or engage in aggressive behaviours and violence perpetration (Reyes et al. 2017). Specifically, the school is one of the major developmental domains where adolescents gather on a regular basis, and this environment can encourage or hamper a range of social and emotional developments. Research found that lower academic performance, for example, the lack of commitment to school work, poor study

skills, and lower grades are consistently associated with a higher risk for involvement in violence (Bernat et al. 2012).

The outcome of youth violence is much distressing. It is essential to find the youth under risk getting involved in violent performances and to impart them with educational preventive programs. Through school, family and community-based interventions youth violence can be prevented or reduced (Russell 2021). Youth who are at risk put their behaviour at risk for upcoming negative consequences and accordingly, they struggle to reflect about long-term penalisation, and they would at no time imagine that worst could ever happen to them. With this backdrop, the study was directed to report the influence of socio demographic variables on violent behaviour among youth.

Objectives

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the magnitude of youth involved in violent behaviour in Coimbatore,
2. To examine the socio-demographic determinants of violent behaviour among youth.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among the 1,205 youth studying in 11th grade to postgraduate in the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Youth between 18-22 years both male and female were selected from the five zones of Coimbatore city. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, after which permission was taken and the research was conducted in schools and colleges, where English is the medium of instruction and which caters to youth from diverse backgrounds.

Socio-demographic profile and Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) were used to collect the data. A general questionnaire was used to collect the personal information/profile of the selected youth, and was formulated with relevance to age, gender, educational status, types of family, father’s and mother’s education, father’s and mother’s occupation and family annual income. The National YRBS Scale and Questionnaires were administered to elicit the information regarding the risks involved in

violence of youth. The 2019 YRBS is a self-report questionnaire scale that was developed by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track adolescent risk behaviour over time, it was directed to a sample of youth planned to monitor health and risk-behaviours.

Descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage analysis was used to assess the different demographic characteristics of youth and the level of risk behaviour related to violence. T-test was applied to compare age group and gender of youth in relation to violent behaviour to see the significant differences. Linear regression analysis was performed to assess the significant influence of socio demographic factors on violent behaviour. The data were subjected to statistical analysis through SPSS 19.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the youth from the present study. Socio-demography is an important aspect in any society. It holds a prominent position in social science as well as behavioural research. Socio demography is the characteristics of a population or of an individual and these characteristics certainly make an individual's identity and have its impression on their development. Understanding the socio demographic features of a population aids the researcher to measure the habit and way of life, which impacts on the lifestyle of people, their ability or capacity and their communication pattern, the practices and the development of the attitude. Several research studies have hypothesised the influence of socio demographic conditions on the behaviour development of adolescents and youth.

Hence, in the present study a set of socio demographic information has been collected and presented. In the above Table 1 it can be understood that out of the total 1205 youth, 50.8 percent were in the age of 20-22 years and 49.2 percent were between the ages of 18-19 years. Looking into the gender category, this Table shows that among the youth respondents' higher percentage were females (57.9%) compared to males (42.1%). This table also classifies youth based on their educational qualification, where the majority of the youth were doing their undergraduate (78%) followed by postgraduate with 34.8 percent and the least belonging to high school with 16.1 percent. One can

observe that 44 percent of the youth reside in the urban area of Coimbatore city, followed by 30.8 percent in rural area and the rest of the youth resides in the semi urban area of Coimbatore (25.2%). Majority of the youth lived in a nuclear family (70.5%) and the rest lived in a joint family (29.5%).

The data stated that the majority of the youth's fathers have completed their postgraduate (29.4%), followed by undergraduate (26.2%), 10th standard (21.5%), few have completed 11th to 12th standard (8.1%) and the rest have completed below 10th standard (7.3%). Talking about the mothers' education, the majority of the youth mothers are 10th passed (29.4%) and 11th to 12th standard (27.7%), followed by mothers completing their undergraduate (18.3%) and below 10th standard (17.4%) and very few completed their postgraduate (6.6%).

Also, the data represents the fathers' occupation where most of them are working in the private sector (47.6%), some work in the government sector (26.3%) and few work as daily wage workers (26.1%). Referring to the youth's mothers' occupation, it can be seen that the majority of the mothers are not employed (69.8%), followed by mothers working as daily wage earners (13.1%). Mothers working in the government sector are quite a few (9.5%) and the rest of the mothers are in the private sector at only 7.6 percent.

The data on the family income shows that 44.6 percent of the youth's family annual income comes between 2-5 lakhs, followed by the income of less than 2 lakhs with 32 percent. It can also be observed that 18.8 percent of the youth family earns an annual income of 5- 10 lakhs.

In Table 2, out of the 1205 youth who responded to the questionnaire, 10.7 percent of them agreed to be using moderately violent behaviour and the rest responded to be having low levels of violent behaviour. However, no one reported having higher levels of violent behaviour. The violent behaviour, which includes carrying a weapon such as knife, etc. to school or college campus may not have been carried by the youth of the city of Coimbatore. Whereas getting into physical fights with peers on the school campus may be expected. A culturally conservative city in the state of Tamil Nadu can be counted as one of the explanations for this level of violent behaviour. Nevertheless, the youth with moderate levels of violent behaviour may be taken into consideration as a risk due its uncertainty of levels, which may increase or decrease.

Table 1: Depicts the socio-demographic profile of the youth

<i>Socio demographic</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Age</i>	18-19 years	593	49.2
	20-22 years	612	50.8
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Gender</i>	Male	507	42.1
	Female	698	57.9
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Education Qualification</i>	High school	194	16.1
	Undergraduate	592	49.1
	Post graduate	419	34.8
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Types of Family</i>	Joint	355	29.5
	Nuclear	850	70.5
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Residence</i>	Urban	530	44.0
	Rural	371	30.8
	Semi urban	364	25.2
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Father's Education</i>	Below 10 th grade	88	7.3
	10 th grade	259	21.5
	11-12 th grade	98	8.1
	Undergraduate	316	26.2
	Postgraduate	354	29.4
	Others	90	7.5
	Total	1205	100.0
	<i>Mother's Education</i>	Below 10 th grade	210
10 th grade		354	29.4
11-12 th grade		334	27.7
Undergraduate		221	18.3
Postgraduate		79	6.6
Others		7	.6
<i>Father's Occupation</i>	Total	1205	100.0
	Government	317	26.3
	Private	574	47.6
	Daily wages	314	26.1
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Mother's Occupation</i>	Government	115	9.5
	Private	91	7.6
	Daily wages	158	13.1
	Not employed	841	69.8
	Total	1205	100.0
<i>Family Annual Income</i>	Less than 2 lakhs	385	32.0
	2 lakhs - 5 lakhs	537	44.6
	5 lakhs - 10 lakhs	226	18.8
	10 lakhs - 20 lakhs	50	4.1
	Above 20 lakhs	7	.6
	Total	1205	100.0

Table 3 represents the t-test comparing age group and gender with regards to violent behaviour among youth. The results of the present study discovered that there is a significant ($P < .000$) difference when it comes to violence and age group. It can be seen that youth between 18-19 years reported higher mean scores to show more violence behaviours than youth

between 20-22 years. As the active environment sways human behaviour, one can observe here how violence impacts more of a teen's life rather than that of the older youth. "Substantial studies have found similar attitudes being expressed by teenage people towards violence. Teenagers' attitudes towards violence have been linked to expectations for 'normal' gender behaviour".

Table 2: Frequency table of the risk factors involving violence

<i>Risk factor</i>	<i>Level of risk</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Violence Related Behaviour</i>	Low	1076	89.3
	Moderate	129	10.7
	Total	1205	100.0

Table 3: Age and gender-wise differences of violent behaviour among youth

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Risk factors</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>
<i>Age Group</i>	Violent behaviour	18-19 years	593	14.6	4.64	1203	4.75	.000
		20-22 years	612	13.6	3.23			
<i>Gender</i>	Violent behaviour	Male	507	15.08	5.15	1203	7.052	.000
		Female	698	13.46	2.75			

Also, when comparing gender with violence, results show a highly significant difference ($P < .000$) where males (15.08) had more violent behaviour risks than that of the females (13.46). A study by Sundaram (2013) stated that “it’s a thing that we know but we can’t put into words and testifying men aren’t allowed to hit women and that’s what you think”. Violence among girls was viewed differently to that of boys. “Naturally, girls’ violence was defined as “emotional or verbal aggression, which includes bullying, isolation and ‘bitchiness’, for example, put-downs, gossiping, narrating and spreading rumours. In some groups, this was well-defined as being more destructive than physical violence, which was classically associated with boys”.

Table 4 shows the influence of socio-demographic factors on the violent behaviour through a linear regression model. Age, gender, educational qualification, types of family, father’s and mother’s education, father’s and mother’s occupation and

the family annual income were considered under socio-demographic variables. According to the Table, the R value of .263 indicated that there is a positive relationship between the independent variable that is socio demographic factors and the dependent variable of violent behaviour with 6.9 percent variance with R square being .069. The Table illustrates that socio demographic factors are certainly an influencing aspect at any given point of time for violent behaviour with the F value being 9.863 and p value of 0.0001 showing 1 percent significant levels. Further, looking at the Beta value, t and p values, one can understand that age, gender and mother’s occupation were found to be the significant predictors at 1 percent levels with t value being -5.300, -6.201 and 3.492 with Beta value of -.170, -.184 and .120 respectively, for age, gender and mothers’ occupation. A cautious view of the results draws attention to even education qualification, which shows a marginal significance

Table 4: Analysis of socio demographic factors with violent behaviour among youth

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Unstandardised coefficient</i>		<i>Standardised coefficient</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p value</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>							
Violence and behaviour (Constant)	1.243	.129								
Age	-.105	.020	-.170		-5.300	.000	.263	.069	9.863	.0001
Gender	-.115	.019	-.184		-6.201	.000				
Education qualification	.029	.015	.065		1.944	.052				
Types of family	-.012	.020	-.018		-.617	.537				
Father’s education	-.012	.012	-.056		-1.029	.304				
Mother’s education	.015	.010	.056		1.448	.148				
Father’s occupation	.006	.026	.015		.249	.803				
Mother’s occupation	.038	.011	.120		3.492	.000				
Annual income	.012	.016	.034		.758	.449				

($P < .052$) for violent behaviour with Beta value of .065 and t value of 1.944, which indicates that the educational qualification of the individual can also be considered as a predictor of violent behaviour. The findings throw light on the socio-demographic or socio-economic conditions and the living conditions, which is already a major indicator of overall health, development and wellbeing of the individuals, which in turn depicts that the society's development has its role in the headway of risk behaviours among teenagers and youth.

DISCUSSION

The observation was made that the overall violence related behaviours among youth are moderate to low in the study. The incidence of physical violence in males was seen to be more than that of the females. In both the genders, the younger age is more connected with physical violence. Several studies have revealed that the degree of violence increases in the preadolescence or early adolescence, peaks in late adolescence, and drops during the young adulthood stage. Age, gender and mothers' occupation have been identified as significant predictors of violent behaviour along with educational qualification showing a marginal significance for violent behaviours of youth. "Parental attachment in adolescence is extremely essential as it serves the purpose of regulation of stress, buffering of aggression and provides a secure base for an adolescent to explore and grow" (Ndugwa 2011). Other studies also support this notion that lack of parental affection and communication and low level of parental support and attachment, causes psychosocial distress leading to physical aggression and violent behaviours (Savage 2014). "The closeness that a child feels toward their parents signals a good quality parent-child relationship and it may also result in greater parental knowledge of children's whereabouts due to children's willingness to volunteer information about their daily lives to parents" (Stattin and Kerr 2010). In addition, a supportive and warm home environment can offer a protected space for young people to grow and develop. "Many observers judged working mothers as selfish, unnatural and even dangerous to their children and society" (Wilson 2006). In ancient times, the role of women was just to give birth to the new generation and to do house-

hold work. Staying at home was important as the whole responsibility of child bearing and childrearing was carried by the mother in the family. In every society around the world, by custom mothers are primary caregivers to infants and children. But things have changed in the 21st century, as the role of women has slowly progressed (Tan and Yazdaniford 2013). In today's world, women play multiple roles, at home they play the role of a homemaker and at the workplace they play the part of the labour force. The working woman plays different characters in her family such as that of a wife, leader, administrator, manager of family income, and most importantly that of a mother. Each of these characters is crucial in nurturing the next generation and society (Bishnoi et al. 2020). Rising maternal employment overlaps with another family change that affects mothers' time and relationship with their children that reflects in changes in family structure (Milkie et al. 2015). Working mothers will easily cause mother-child barriers, as they may not be able to provide quality time to their youth, as they carry additional responsibility at work and at the domestic front. Essentially, both of these jobs are tremendously tough as both cannot be neglected but to be given impartial attention and prominence, which is quite challenging. A lack of emotional attachment and bonding between youth and working mothers, poor parenting practices due to their busy schedule, family dysfunction and separation may lead to low involvement of employed mothers, which might be also one of the reasons for youth to show their frustration in the form of violence. Preceding studies claimed that family and parental factors deliberated as strong predictors for the development of antisocial behaviour, while Diana Baumrind (1995), debates that poor parenting and poorer level of family socio-economic status considerably engaged with children's violent behaviour. Coming to gender and violence, when surveyed with respect to why they assumed violent behaviour was not acceptable after committed by a man and not by a woman, the male members often raised narratives about 'feeling' and 'sense' that committing violence towards women was wrong, but without being able to express as to why this was the scenario. Gender and age put adolescent girls at a double disadvantage based on intersectional systems of oppression, exclusion, and discrimination (Imkaan 2019). An individual-level risk and protective factors and gender-based

violence is considered perpetuated by macro level forces like rigid gender roles, and acceptance of interpersonal violence at a social level (Decker et al. 2015). Cobinna et al. (2010) stated that “young men characterised their own violence as dangerous, whereas the violence carried out by girls even when it was similar in form and character to that of the boys was understood as being emotionally based, hysterical and about trivial matters”. Violence is one of the major causes of physical harm, psychological distress, lasting physical ill-health and long-term physical or mental disability. Such violence can create a bad impact and bring a negative outcome in the life of the youth be it in the present or even in their future.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the current study showed age and gender-wise differences in violent behaviour among youth. Also, socio demographic influences on violence behaviour existed and it was also found that age, gender and mother’s occupation are the significant predictors of violence behaviour among youth. Research findings on age differences in violence designates that prevalence of violent behaviours upturns as an individual gets older. Younger adolescents are exclusively vulnerable in their early teen years and they focus to an unlimited deal of peer pressure in order to adapt certain ethics, rules and actions so they tend to resolve conflict mainly using negative approaches such as aggression, but as they age, they practise extra positive styles such as conversation and compromise to resolve conflicts. This result also reveals that there is a gender difference in violent behaviours because both boys and girls take and handle risk differently, and therefore, both genders might have diverse ideas of what creates violent behaviours, for example girls predict more of internalising behaviours so they keep their anger and emotions inside of them whereas boys are more externalising where they report more aggressive behavioural reactions, which brings out their aggressiveness out of them in the form of fights and creates violence. Likewise, the findings of linear regression shows that the socio demographic factors (age, gender, mothers’ occupation) of the respondents were found to be a significant predictor of violent behaviour among youth, it may be thought that weak parenting can also yield a great

er level of violence among young people that may be one powerful reason to push them to be involved in violent behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Violence in young people is a problem with massive public health significance. Risk assessment may include interviews with the subject, caretaker, family member, friends and teacher, along with reviewing mental health. It is essential to carry out more research that explicates the influence of various violence types right from adolescence into adulthood. On the basis of discoveries of this research, it is recommended to understand the violent behaviour among youth, minor deviation is needed to study from young individuals in school and college settings in the cultural context of Indian society. It is also suggested to study the minor violent behaviour among young people in the context of peer pressure, familial pressure, and cultural principles. A much stronger research base work will support the researchers and practitioners to design more interventions with long and lasting effects on violence. The study recommends intervention for the “youth in schools and colleges which involves guidance counselling programmes”. Though, youth come from various socio demographic backgrounds, belonging to different age groups and gender, their violent behaviours need to be identified and intervened at the earliest for a positive youth development and wellbeing.

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