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## Research Article

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY OF CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

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#### ABSTRACT

Adolescence is considered as a significant period in human development. It is an age of transition in which an individual develops from childhood to adulthood. Development happens in all aspects such as physical, physiological, social and emotional. All developmental task of adolescence are focused on overcoming childish attitudes and behaviour patterns and preparing for adulthood. As growth proceeds the adolescents may face problems in attaining the development. The problems may occur in different levels such as physical, psychological, social and behavioural. The present study focuses on the Social and Emotional Maturity of children with behavioural problems. The parents, educators, government and public might not realize that the discipline or behavioural problem is a type of mental health difficulties and its root cause is the lacking of social-emotional competencies, and therefore without this awareness, they continue to encourage for the punish-based disciplinary practices. As adolescents grow older their parents refuse to modify their concepts of their children's abilities which results in conflict between them. In the present paper the researcher found the gaps in the supportive disciplinary practices which encourage children to develop self-control, confidence and respect for others in the current educational process and also finally through what measures the behavioural problems can be corrected in the grass root level.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The term adolescence comes from the Latin word *adolescere* which means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity." It includes mental, emotional, social and physical maturity. The stages of adolescence are categorized as early adolescence and late adolescence. Early adolescence involves the initiation and completion of the physical changes associated with puberty and ends at the age of sixteen. The dividing line between the two stages is arbitrarily placed at the age of seventeen. Late adolescence begins when the physical changes are completed. It extends up to the age of eighteen, when the individual attains legal maturity. There are 1.2 billion adolescents ageing from 10- 19 years in the world which constitutes 18 per cent of the world's population (UNICEF, 2016). Out of the total population of India 236.5 million (19.6%) is of the adolescents belonging to the age group of 10 to 19 years. According to the Census Report (2011), the adolescent population of Kerala is 16. 3%. Adolescence is one of the periods when both the immediate effects and long- term effects are important. Physical and psychological effects are equally important in the adolescent period. Transition does not mean a break or a change from what has gone before but passing from one stage

of development to another. The former phase may left its mark and will influence the new patterns of behaviour and attitudes of the latter stages. During the transitional period the individual is confused about the roles which are expected to play. If they behave like children they are told to act according to the age, if they try to act like adults they are accused for being too big. The rate of change in attitudes and behaviour during adolescence is comparable with the rate of physical changes. When the physical changes are rapid the changes in behaviour and attitudes are also rapid. As the physical changes slows down the behaviour and attitudes also slows down.

##### *Need of Addressing the Issues of Adolescents*

At present the government, educators, parents and society focused on discussing the contributing factors for disciplinary problems such as low socioeconomic status, peer influence, lack of parental guidance and religious instruction, school problems, lack of social skills and lack of proportionate teachers to address the emotional needs of children. The parents, educators, government and public might not realize that the discipline or behavioural problem is a type of mental health difficulties and its root cause is the lacking of social-

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emotional competencies, and therefore without this awareness, they continue to encourage for the punish-based disciplinary practices. When parents and teachers expect children to conform to all the rules and regulations and work to their expectations especially academically and behaviourally, some children may just “disappoint” the adults. Any inappropriate strategies by the adults may end up bigger disappointments. Reactive and corrective approach is actually trying to suppress the symptoms instead of treating the root cause.

Earlier studies revealed that the influences of variables like broken families, parenting, institutionalization, teachers, and peer group have a great impact on the behaviour of adolescents. The study intended in understanding the social and emotional maturity of school going adolescent children with reported behavioural problems. The study also highlighted the role of parents and teachers in the development of adolescents’ behaviour. Through this study the researcher found the gaps in the supportive disciplinary practices which encourage children to develop self-control, confidence and respect for others in the current educational process and also finally through what measures the behavioural problems can be corrected in the grass root level.

Adolescence is the period of storm and stress, a time of heightened emotional tension which is the result of physical and glandular changes. Most adolescents experience emotional instability while making adjustments to new patterns of behaviour and to new social expectations. Adolescent emotions are intense, uncontrollable, irritable and irrational in nature. Adolescents express their anger by sulking, refusing to speak or through loud criticism. Adolescents achieve emotional maturity in the late adolescence phase. They may assess the situation critically before responding to it emotionally.

As growth proceeds the adolescents may face problems in attaining the development. The problems may occur in different levels such as physical, psychological, social and behavioural.

### ***Behavioural Problems of Adolescents***

The World Health Organization document on Mental Health Programmes in Schools (1994) predicted that nearly one in five children and adolescents will have an emotional/behavioural disorder at some time during their youth regardless of their geographical and socio- economic contexts (Costello 1989; Baznenova 1992). A behaviour problem is a deviant behaviour of an adolescent which does not conform to the expectations of the society, and it is considered detrimental to the welfare of the self, family, and society (Kale, 1978).

Some of the major behaviour problems seen commonly in adolescence are lying, stealing, shyness, submissiveness, truancy, eating disorders, (anorexia or obesity) hyper activity, inferiority complex, jealousy, day dreaming, psychogenic vomiting, aches and pains, nail biting, stubbornness, speech disorder, phobia, nightmares, scholastic backwardness, anxiety, tension, aggression, etc. Problems of adolescents are receiving much attention at the present time. Behaviour problems of adolescents are an adolescents’ way of reacting to a different environment and are indeed a help, a danger signal arising from adverse surroundings. Children with such difficulties show impairments in family, among the peer and school settings.

They may experience poor academic grades, low academic motivation, have negative family interactions, poor social skills, socially rejected and have a poor self- image (Maslow, 1988).

### ***Need for Social and Emotional Maturity of Adolescents***

Maturity is the final result of development. A matured individual is a fully developed person. Social maturity encompasses attainments in several domains, including independent functioning, effective interpersonal communication, interaction and responsibility that contribute to the well being of the society. Social maturity is evidence by an individual’s capacity for making and keeping friends. To be effective in his or her social relations, a person needs to acquire the social skills that enable him to deal with people tactfully and with understanding. Social maturity and adjustment problems of the adolescents are interrelated.

The Social Maturity of an adolescent is influenced by various social factors such as dependence, self control, stress management, social maturation, ability to accustom with social situation and social adjustment. Socially mature children have developed social abilities and they utilize them. Children with high social maturity have high competency and ability to deal with social situations. Social immaturity in children creates social as well as personal problems.

Social maturity is the ability to function in an appropriately responsible manner through understanding the social rules and norms within a given culture and also the ability to use the gained knowledge effectively. Social maturity produces a climate of trust, harmony, active co-operation and peaceful co-existence (Gupta, 2014). An immature adolescent creates problems with his family, peer group and society so it is necessary for adolescent to acquire more mature pattern of behaviour to be accepted by society and to be socially matured. In the present world children are facing many difficulties in life. These difficulties may result in many psycho- somatic problems such as anxiety, tensions, frustrations and emotional upsets. Emotional maturity is not only the effective determinant of personality pattern but it also helps to control the growth of adolescent’s development. Mature emotional behaviour refers to a person’s ability to keep his emotions under control and behave in a normal way.

## **METHODOLOGY**

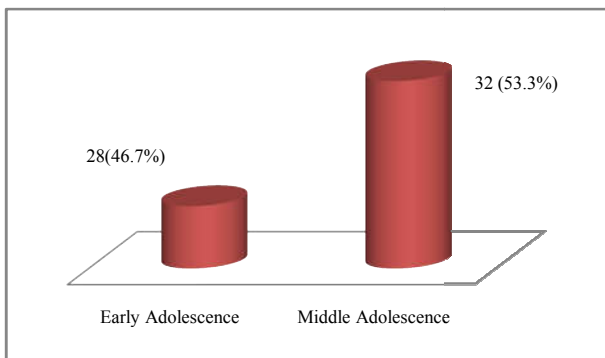
The primary objective of this paper is to study the social and emotional maturity of children with behavioural problems in Peermade, a village in Idukki district. The study is conducted among the adolescent school children from the age group of 10 to 17 years from schools in Peermade Grama Panchayat. School children in Peermade face many problems such as lack of security, poverty, transportation facilities and poor financial background. Majority of the children drop from school and went for jobs. Teachers and counsellors are aware about the existing pattern and they are not able to provide a suitable environment for the betterment of children. The study aims in understanding the social and emotional maturity of those children with behavioural problems that is how the children socially and emotionally respond to situations that they have to face.

Diagnostic research design has been used for this study. By measuring the social and emotional maturity of children the researcher tries to diagnose that how the children with behavioural problem are associated with their social and emotional maturity. The children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and substance abuse were selected to study about the emotional and social maturity. The study aimed to understand whether this behaviour problems results in any anti social behaviour. The collected data was analysed by using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

**Table No 1** Gender of the Respondent

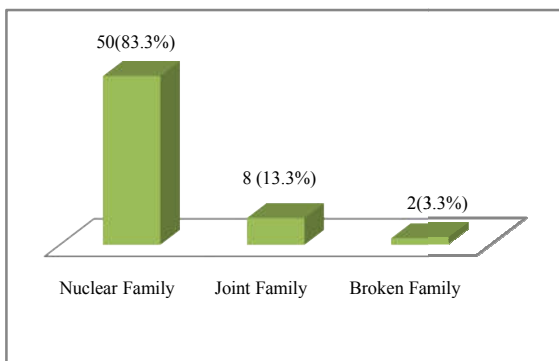
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	83.3
Female	10	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Majority of children with reported behavioural problems are boys. The table shows that 83.3% of the respondents are males which are more than half of the total population. Females represent only 16.7%. The pre-test study reports stated that the majority of the respondents where males. The physical changes results in heightened emotionality in males. They may express their internal conflicts and behave like rebels whereas females tries to suppress their feelings.



**Graph No 1** Age Group of the Respondent

The above graph shows that all the respondents of the study belongs to the early and middle adolescence. Most of the respondents i.e., 53.3% are in the age group of 15-17, the middle adolescence period in which they had attained the physical changes and preparing for the late adolescence stage where they attains legal maturity. Remaining 46.7% representing early adolescence involves in the initiation and transition of physical changes.



**Graph No 2** Type of Family

The diagram shows the percentage of nuclear family, joint family and broken family. Majority of the children (83.3%) are from nuclear family that lacks the care and guidance from their grandparents. In shaping the behaviour of a child the grandparents also plays a major role. The 13.3% of respondents are from joint family and minorities of 3.3% are from broken families. Those children from broken families lack the care from both their parents and from families. They have a high chance for getting into deviant behaviour because they lack the moral development which is imbibed from the family atmosphere.

**Table No 2** Level of ADHD

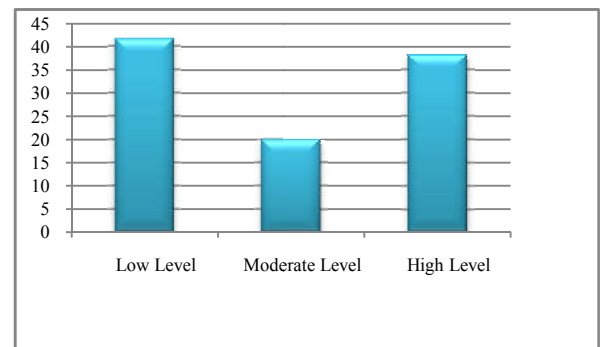
ADHD	Frequency	Percent
Low Level	21	35.0
Moderate Level	21	35.0
High Level	18	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

ADHD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders of childhood which persists through adolescence and into adulthood. Low, Medium and High level of ADHD can be seen in all respondents.

**Table No 3** Substance Abuse

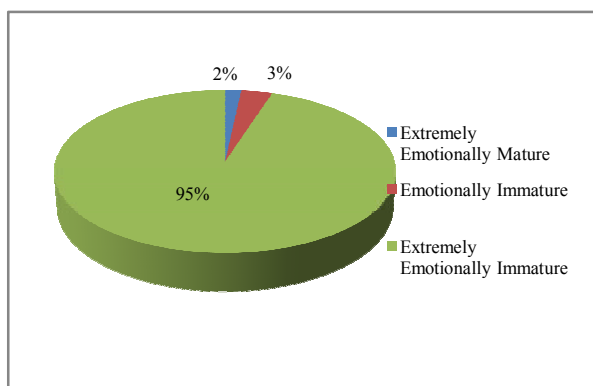
Substance Abuse	Frequency	Percent
Low Level	20	33.3
Moderate Level	24	40.0
High Level	16	26.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. The study found that 40% of respondents have moderate level of substance use, 20% have low level usage and 16% has high level of use.



**Graph No 3** Level of Social Maturity

The above graph shows the level of social maturity of children with reported behavioural problems. Graph reveals that 41.7% of the total respondents have low level of social maturity. 20% have moderate social maturity and 38.3% have high level of social maturity. The social immaturity may because of poor communication, cooperation, social commitment, social tolerance and openness to change. Social maturity is needed for the process of socialization, for reducing the egocentricity, for developing self- confidence and human values within individuals.



Graph No 4 Emotional Maturity

Emotional Maturity is not only the effective determinant of personality pattern but it also helps to control the growth of adolescent’s development. Mature emotional behaviour refers to a person’s ability to keep his emotions under control and behave in a normal way. The graph indicates that 95% of the respondents are extremely emotionally immature which ranges from 107- 240. The 2% shows that the respondents are extremely emotionally mature. Among the respondents 3% constitutes emotionally immature group. The graph illustrates a gap where there are no respondents with moderate level of emotional maturity.

Table No 4 Social and Emotional Maturity

	Gender of the Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	DF	P Value
Social Maturity	Male	50	2.0200	0.91451	1.025	58	0.309
	Female	10	1.7000	0.82327			
Emotional Maturity	Male	50	156.660	29.315	0.320	58	0.750
	Female	10	159.800	22.429			

$H_0$ = There is no difference in social and emotional maturity with regard to the gender of the respondent

$H_a$ = There is difference in social and emotional maturity with regard to gender of the respondent

The p value is 0.309; the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance i.e. there is no difference in social maturity with regard to gender of the respondent. Communication, cooperation, social commitment, social tolerance and openness to change are the five aspects of social maturity which is not influenced by the gender. Either the male or the female both should possess the social maturity. The factors within the social maturity should be developed and polished by the individual themselves.

Adolescent emotions are often intense, uncontrolled and irrational however there is an improvement in emotional behaviour with each passing year. To achieve emotional maturity, they learn to get a perspective on situations which lead to emotional reactions. Table 4 shows the t-test done to know the difference between the emotional maturity and gender of the respondents. The p value is 0.750; the null hypothesis for emotional maturity is accepted at 5% level of significance. There is no difference in emotional maturity with regard to gender. Despite of being male or female the emotional maturity influences the individuals. It is an individual’s level of emotional stability, emotional progression,

social adjustment, personality integration and independence contribute to their emotionally matured behaviour.

**Major Findings**

- ✓ Majority of the respondents (53.3%) are in the age group of 15-17, which is the middle adolescence. Male respondents represent 83.3% out of the total.
- ✓ Majority of 83.3% respondents are hailed from nuclear family, 13.3% from joint family and rest 3.3% from broken families. Out the total respondents 43.33% are middle child.
- ✓ A minority of 6.6% and 3.3% consequently represents the percentage of illiterate father and mother. Majority of father has attained primary education and mothers have secondary education.
- ✓ The present study found that of the total respondents 35% shows high level of ADHD among the children with reported behavioral problems.
- ✓ Among the 60 respondents, 26.7% have high level of substance abuse, 63.3% including both male and females uses alcohol. Majority population of 51.7% has the habit of smoking.
- ✓ About 41.7% of the total respondents have low level of social maturity. 20% have moderate social maturity and 38.3% have high level of social maturity.
- ✓ The study reveals that 95% of the respondents are extremely emotionally immature 2% represent the extremely emotionally mature and 3% represents emotionally immature group. There are no respondents with moderate level of emotional maturity.

**Suggestions**

- Majority of the parents of the respondents are working in the estates, they have not been ensured with their provident fund and gratuity amount. The management should guarantee that the employees should get their provident fund and gratuity amount at the time of retirement.
- For improving the socio economic background the employers should provide better salary to the workers. The minimum wages provided to the employees should be sufficient enough to maintain 4 members in a family.
- Social Workers should guarantee that the employees had achieved basic educational status and should provide it to those who hadn’t in association with the literary mission.
- Social Workers may assure that gloves, uniforms and weather related clothing are supplied the workers.
- The Social Welfare Departments should appoint welfare officers in the managements to ensure the safety, to maintain the records with the signatures of the workers.
- The behavioral problems of the children can be reduced through the following interventions such as proper diagnosis, accurate pharmacotherapy, providing behaviour modification, providing behaviour modification, counselling and supportive psychotherapy and behaviour therapies.
- Social maturity can be increased through life skill education, motivation, and by introducing adolescent development clubs

- Emotional maturity can be increased through socio-emotional learning and developing emotional regulation skills in children.

### Social Work Intervention

To deal with the problems of the individuals, groups and community the Social Worker must have the meticulous knowledge of the foundation of social work practice. The Social Work practice helps the Social Workers to identify deep rooted problems lying within individuals as well as with the environment. Intervening in the lives of adolescent's is challenging. Social Work practice with adolescents also includes their families, peer group members and teachers at the primary level. The Standards for the Practice of Social Work with Adolescence by NASW can be practiced among adolescents for promoting positive change in their existing situations and building resilience capacity within the individuals who are facing emotional and behavioral problems. Motivation on the need, scope and importance of education should be taught to the children.

Social Workers can assist in providing health care facilities, legal protection, financial assistance, counseling and therapies to the children. Social Workers can understand the turmoil's in the life of adolescents. Students support, character education and after school services can be provided to the children by social Workers. Adolescent's friendly clubs should be introduced in every schools and regular meetings and counseling should be given to the children. They can create Awareness Generation Project Programme for creating awareness in the community about the importance of adolescents. Social workers should possess the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the participation of and to actively encourage the decision-making skills of adolescents and also should strive to empower the adolescent community.

### CONCLUSION

Adolescence is the advancement from a child to a person. The immediate social relations play a key role of a promoter for adolescents to conquer the ultimate self identity. The hindrance in the maturity results in behavioural problems. Ignorance towards this may have an effect on the social and emotional maturity of those children. They lack the individuality that has been developed through the process of interaction with the social environment to which they belongs to and was not able to express the expected emotionally matured behaviour. Exploring the adolescent's life is a difficult task for an outsider but it can be easily peeled by their parents, teachers and especially the peers. Initial stages of diagnosis and treatment may cure the behavioural problems in adolescents and the process of self realization helps them to be socially and emotionally mature. Utilizing their skills, talents and abilities the adolescents may compete with the present world.

There are many problems which the adolescents face throughout the stages of development. Some of the problems that witnessed in the childhood may persist throughout the life due to the improper diagnosis and treatment. It is mainly because of the lack of awareness among the different systems to which the child is connected. Adopting proper techniques for solving the problems faced by the adolescent community helps to create healthy citizens.

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