

Research Paper

Role of Peer Pressure and Home Environment in Adolescent's Antisocial Behaviour: A Qualitative Study

Dr. Sonoo^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Adolescents' antisocial behaviour is one of the serious problems of society. Increasing levels of antisocial behaviours are a national concern. The present study aims to identify the possible role of peer pressure and home environment as antecedents of antisocial behaviour among adolescents. The sample included 20 male adolescents aged 10-18 years residing in rehabilitation homes. The kind of antisocial behavior that adolescents indulge in related to petty crime, serious crime, and heinous crime. Data were collected through in-depth interviews. Thematic network analysis was used for analyzing the data. The results of the study showed that peer pressure and home environment play an important role in the development of antisocial behaviour in adolescents. Peer pressure as an antecedent identified four basic themes, namely: peer pressure for substance abuse, peer pressure for theft, peer pressure for rape, and peer pressure for violence. Home environment as an antecedent of adolescent's antisocial behaviour identified five basic themes: broken home, family disputes, parental neglect, domestic violence, and substance-abusing parents. Findings of the present study play an important role in drafting policies, developing a program for reducing antisocial behaviour, and strategies to enhance psychological well-being of antisocial adolescents.

Keywords: *Antisocial Behaviour, Adolescents, Home Environment, Peer Pressure*

Adolescents: Adolescence is a transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as a person aged 10-19. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological, or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. For example, puberty now typically begins during preadolescence, particularly in females. Adolescence has been described as the period in life when an individual is no longer a child, but not yet an adult. It is a period during which an individual undergoes significant physical and psychological changes.

Antisocial behaviour: Antisocial behavior is a pattern of behavior that is verbally or physically harmful to other people, animals, or property, including behavior that severely violates social expectations for a particular environment. Antisocial behaviors are actions that harm or fail to consider the well-being of others. According to Farrington (2005), "antisocial behavior in childhood and adolescence is categorized as behavior disorders,

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, K. S. Saket P.G. College, Ayodhya, UP

*Corresponding Author

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impulsiveness, stealing, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying, running away from home, and truancy.”

Many theories talk about the root causes of antisocial behaviour. Some important theories are discussed briefly. The routine activity theory of crime was developed by Cohen and Felson in 1979. They proposed that antisocial behaviour is the outcome of three things- a motivated antisocial person, suitable victims, and the absence of a capable caretaker (Bottoms and Wiles, 1997). Crime pattern theory was developed by the Brantinghams in 1981. They proposed that crime is not random; it is either planned or opportunistic. This theory examines the ways targets come to the attention of criminals and how this influences the distribution of crime events over time and space. The rational choice theory of antisocial behaviour was developed by Cornish and Clarke in 1987. They proposed that motivated antisocial persons make a cost-benefit balance before committing antisocial behaviour and make the decision to act if the expected benefit exceeds perceived costs and risks. Situational action theory was developed by Wikstrom in 2004. He proposed three basic explanatory mechanisms – the situational mechanism, which explains why crime events happen; the selection mechanism, which explains why criminogenic situations arise; and the emergence mechanism, which explains why people and places become different in aspects relevant to crime causation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adolescents' antisocial behaviour is influenced not only by their surroundings and environment but also by what they observe. Family and peers are the two most important socialization agencies. Through these agencies, children learn the values and norms of any society and culture. Adolescents learn from what they hear and see from their parents, friends, and society. Chung and Steinberg (2006) reported in their study that the tendency towards anti-social behavior in adolescents is not innate; rather, they learn it through gang, imitation, observation, peer pressure, requirements, desires, influence, and needs.

Home environment and adolescents' antisocial behaviour: Dysfunctional families have repeatedly been noted by researchers as significant antecedents of antisocial behaviour in adolescents. Zakaria and his colleagues (2022) reported that families are not able to raise their children properly due to various reasons, like drug-abusing families, family members being in jail, divorce of the parents, physical and mental health issues in the family, domestic violence, low socioeconomic status, low education level, poor parenting skills, etc. Haveripet (2013) reported that in India, many reasons are responsible for antisocial behaviour in adolescents, like poor family control, family conflict, home environment, poverty, etc. Venkatachalam and Arvindan (2014) reported in their study that unstable families, broken homes, family mobility, the mental health of parents, younger mothers, the number of children in the family, the parent family, and the parental past are the family characteristics of antisocial adolescents. Boutwell and Beaver (2010) reported in their study that adolescents who grow up in dysfunctional families are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour than others. Gorman and Tolan (1998) reported that exposure to community violence was related to increases in aggressive behavior and other forms of antisocial behaviour in adolescents.

Peer Pressure and adolescents' antisocial behaviour: Similarly to family, the behaviour of peers also has a significant impact on the personality, attitude, and ideology of adolescents. Peers have the greatest influence during adolescence than at any other stage in a

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person's life (Sternberg and Monahan, 2007). Adolescents were under pressure to continue engaging in antisocial behaviour, so they modified their views and behaviour to match those of their peer group (Yusuf et al., 2021). Davis and Allen (2021) reported that social rejection by peers acts as a social stressor that increases the tendency toward antisocial behaviour in adolescents. In another study, researchers reported a positive and significant correlation between peer pressure and different forms of antisocial behaviour (Seema et al., 2022). Lasisi and his colleagues (2021) reported that there was a significant relationship between peer influence and antisocial behaviour in adolescents. In their study of 400 adolescents (200 boys and 200 girls), Khan (2018) reported that male adolescents experience more peer pressure than females, and that adolescents aged 10 to 14 years (early adolescence) experience more peer pressure than those in late adolescence.

Rationale of the study:

The future of any country depends on its youth and adolescent population, because they serve as an important asset in shaping the country's destiny. More than 21% of India's population is adolescents (Census of India, 2011). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the age range for adolescents is 10 to 19 years. In this stage, adolescents experience significant physical, emotional, and psychological developmental changes. When these people are not able to adjust properly to the physical, emotional, and psychological changes taking place within them and they do not get proper socialization by various social agencies (family, neighbour, peer, school, etc.), then these national assets become a national threat. Adolescents, as a national threat, significantly affect the nation's overall development and well-being. If these national threats are not resolved in a timely manner, then they promote crime and antisocial behaviour in the country and hinder the holistic development of the country. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report in 2000, a total of 9,267 adolescents indulged in antisocial behaviour, whereas in 2024 this figure increased to 34,878. In simple words, the report shows that antisocial behaviour committed by adolescents in India has increased by more than 376.36 % between 2000 and 2024.

A review of the literature shows that some of the causes of antisocial behavior are poverty, insecure attachment styles, child abuse, peer pressure, peer support, faulty parenting, alcoholic parents, antisocial parents, broken homes, aggressiveness, exposure to media, and discrepancies between demand and resources. Very few systematic attempts have been made to explore the role of the home environment and peer pressure as antecedents of antisocial behavior in adolescents. Also, there is a dearth of studies in the Indian context. An in-depth understanding of the adolescent's antisocial behaviour problem will serve as a baseline for the implementation of preventive approaches and measures to minimize the crime rate and other social issues in India. Therefore, the present research aims to fill this caveat in the literature.

METHODOLOGY

Study Setting:

The study was conducted in a juvenile observation home in Khuldabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (India). This is one of the 18 divisions of Uttar Pradesh (India) that keep antisocial adolescents in observation homes until the trial of their cases. Under the Prayagraj division, antisocial adolescents from Prayagraj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi, and Fatehpur districts are kept in the observation home.

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Study Population, Sample and Sampling:

Observation homes are institutions where antisocial adolescents are kept until court proceedings are over. Their ages range from 07 to 18 years. In these institutions, district probation officers provide entertainment, education, training, etc. to the inmates. In the current study, the adolescents residing in the observation home under the Prayagraj Division of Uttar Pradesh (India) were selected for data collection. Out of the total number of inmates, only 20 were selected for the final study. Purposive sampling was used for recruiting participants.

Table: 01 showing demographic details of participants

ID	Living Time (Moths)	Age	Crime Type	Education	Parent	Rural/ Urban	How many Times	SES	Occupation of Parent
Case 01	31	17	Heinous	10th pass	Both living	Urban	02	Medium	Truck Driver
Case 02	30	15	Serious	Illiterate	Both Living	Rural	03	Medium	Former
Case 03	32	17	Heinous	9th Pass	Both Living	Rural	01	Very Low	Labour
Case 04	05	14.8	Serious	5th	Both are died	Urban	04	NA	NA
Case 05	15	17	Heinous	Illiterate	Both Living	Urban	03	Medium	Earning money from Saudi
Case 06	07	16	Serious	Illiterate	Both Living	rural	02	Very low	Labour
Case 07	04	17	Serious	Illiterate	Only mother	Rural	03	Very Low	House wife
Case 08	16	18	Heinous	Illiterate	Both Living	Urban	01	Medium	Farmer
Case 09	40	15	Heinous	5th	Both Living,	Rural	02	Poor	Nothing, father drunk alcohol
Case 10	27	16	Heinous	8th	Only father	rural	01	Poor	Pan ki dukan
Case 11	22	17	Heinous	12th	Both Living	Rural	01	Good	Hotel Manager
Case 12	20	17	Serious	Illiterate	Both Living	Rural	01	Very Poor	Labour
Case 13	24	17	Heinous	Illiterate	Mother	Urban	03	Poor	Nothing
Case 14	29	16	Heinous	8th	Both Living	Rural	01	Poor	Labour
Case 15	08	17	Heinous	Studying in 12th	Both Living	Rural	01	High	Business
Case 16	06	17	Heinous	Studying in 11th	Both Living	Rural	01	Medium	Farmer
Case 17	12	13	Serious	Illiterate	Both Living	Rural	01	Very poor	Labour
Case 18	11	16	Heinous	Illiterate	Both Living	Rural	01	Very Poor	Labour
Case 19	07	15	Heinous	8th	Both Living	Rural	01	Very Poor	Labour
Case 20	04	17	Heinous	10th	Both Living	Urban	01	Good	Government Job

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Data collection and Data Analysis:

This is qualitative research. In this study, the researcher used the interview method of data collection. The researcher had already completed a one-year diploma course in counseling and guidance, and he also had prior experience conducting interviews, so he did not face any problems during data collection. During this period, the researcher also did an internship program at the same institution from November 22, 2021, to May 20, 2022. In the current study, thematic network analysis was used to analyze the data, a method for analyzing qualitative data.

Ethical Consideration:

The current study has been conducted with adolescents living in a reformatory home. This study was conducted after receiving approval from the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of the University of Allahabad, Prayagraj. Apart from this, before data collection from inmates of the institution, written permission was obtained from the superintendent of the observation home in Khuldabad, Prayagraj (UP).

RESULT

Thematic network analysis led to the emergence of two organizing themes (peer pressure and home environment) and nine basic themes (peer pressure for substance abuse, peer pressure for theft, peer pressure for rape, and peer pressure for violence; broken homes, family disputes, parental neglect, domestic violence, and substance-abusing parents) about the antecedents of adolescents' antisocial behaviour.

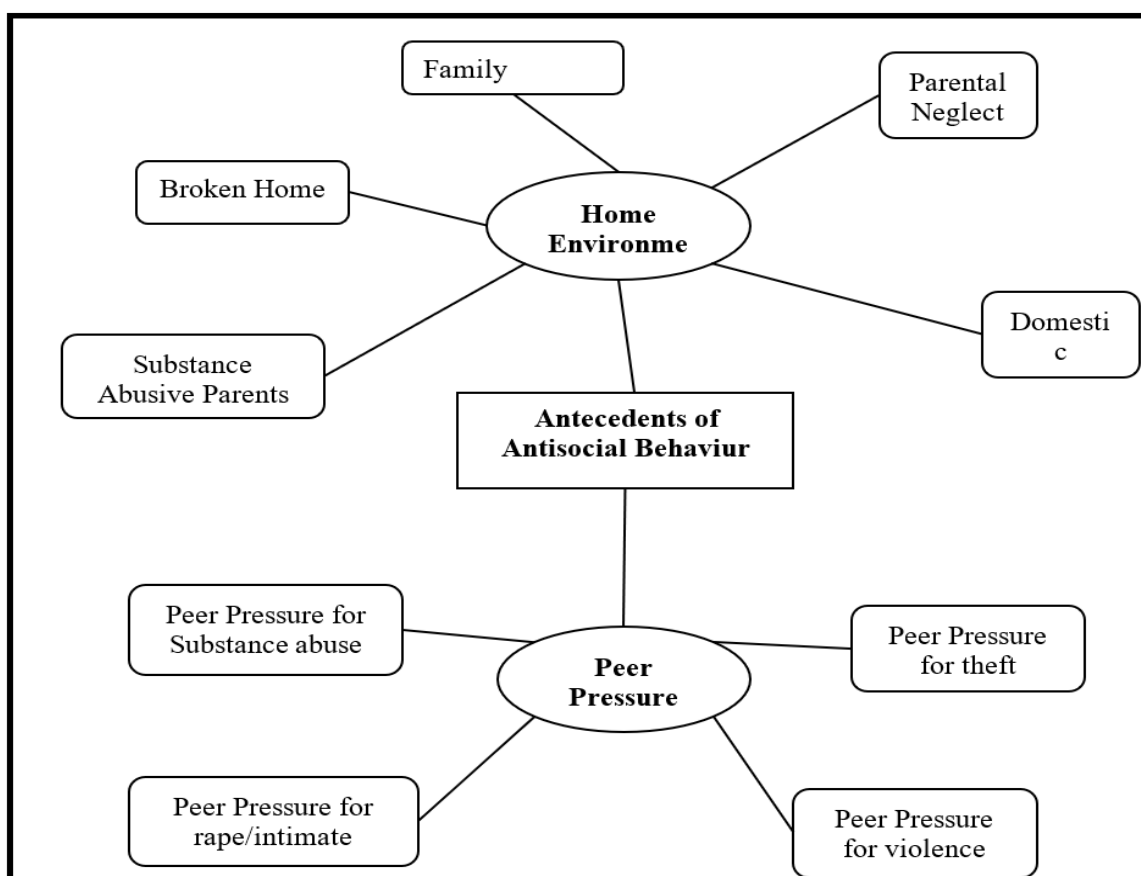


Figure: 01 showing the thematic network of antecedents of adolescents' antisocial behaviour

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Participant 04, age 14 years reported (Theft case, 3rd time he was kept in observation home)-

"Pahle meri mata ka nidhan hua aur uske baad mere pita ka nidhan huua, mere chacha aur bahan milkar mujhe maar dalna chahte the. Esiliye main ghar chhodkar bhag aya aur yah sab galat kaam karne laga."

The participant reported that, due to the deaths of his parents, other family members wanted to grab his property and were planning to kill him. That's why he had to leave home and adopt antisocial behaviour to live his life.

Participant 14, age 16 years, reported

"Mere mammi papa ke beech hamesha ladai-jhagda hota rahta tha, mere pita mujhe bhi marte the aur meri maa ko bhi. Jiski vajah se meri maa ne mere pita se talaq le liya. Agar mere mata pita ke rishte sahi hote to aaj main yaha nahi hota."

The participant reported that due to a bad relationship with my father, my mother and I suffer a lot. If my mother's relationship with my father was good, then I would never have gotten involved in antisocial behaviour.

Participant 12, age 13 years reported (Theft, 3rd time arrived in observation home)

"Main jhuggi jhopdi mein rahta hu. Mere pita nahi hai. Main apni maa ke sath kuda binane ka kaam karta hu. Usse jo paisa milta hai, usi se khana kha pata hu. Apni jaruraton ko pura karne ke liye chori karta hu."

The participant reported that, due to poverty, he is not able to get food easily and properly. He helped his mother with her work. To fulfill his needs, he engages in antisocial behaviour.

Participant 12, age 15 years reported

"Hamare papa daru bahut peete hain. Daru peekar mammi ko bhi peetate hain. Hamari bahan ko bhi gali dete hain. Ham log jab bhi bolte hain hamko bhi marte hai, datate hain. Hamari mammi ki tabiyat bahut kharab rahti hai. Pagal si ho gyi hain vo. Bachpan se bahut garibi rahi hai. Ho do judwa bhai hain. Ham log maang kar late the to ghar par khana banta tha. Ghar ki pareshani dekhkar hame bachpan se hi kaam karna pada aur kama kar paisa bhi dete hain ghar par aur papa ki gali bhi sunte hai, maar bhi khate hain."

The participant reported that, due to a negative home environment, he and his twin brother began working at an early age. They are supporting their family with earned money, but despite this, their father beats and abuses them regularly.

Participant 17, age 13 years reported (363)

"Jab meri sauteli maan mujhe marti hai, mere haath pair bandh deti hai tab par bhi mere sage pita aur meri maan ko kuchh nahi bolte. Main kitna bhi rou mujhe koi chup karane kabhi nahi aaya."

The participant reported that, due to his father's neglect, he indulged in antisocial behaviour. His stepmother beat and tortured him regularly. His father knew it very well but always ignored him.

Participant 05, age 17 year, reported (363 and 376, 3rd time in observation home)

"Mere ghar mein apradh ka purana itihash raha hai, mere bade papa aur mama abhi bhi hatya ke case mein jail mein band hai. Mere dada bhi hatya ke case mein jail mein band the. Mere papa ko bhi jail hui thi, ladai jhagda ko lekar, lekin unka apradh sabit nahi ho paya aur vo chhoot gye."

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The participant reported that there is a long history of antisocial behaviour in his family. His maternal uncle and elder father are still in jail in the murder case. His father has also been jailed for antisocial behaviour.

Participant 04, age 16 years, reported.

"Jab mere dost log ladki ke sath rape kar rahe the tab main sirf vaha khada tha. Mere ek dost ne kaha ki tum bhi kar lo kuchh hoga nahi koi jaan nahi payega. Usi ne mujhko es kaam ke liye uksaya tha. Kash koi mujhe rokne vala hota to main ye kaam nahi karta aur bach jata."

The participant reported that when his friends were committing antisocial behaviour, he was just standing there. His friends helped him do it, too, because it would be fun. That's why I also committed antisocial behaviour. If there was someone to stop me, I would never have done these bad things.

Participant 04, age 14 years reported (Theft case, 3rd time he was kept in observation home)-

"Mere dosto ne pahli baar kumbh mere mein mujhse char paanch hajar ka mobile chori karvaya tha. Vah log kahte the ki mobile charge mein laga hua hai javo utha lo aur main jakar utha leta tha. Usko ham log lakshaman market mein bech dete the."

The participant reported that he used to live only with his friends. He did not engage in any antisocial behaviour. He first exhibited antisocial behaviour due to pressure from his friends. When they were strolling at the Kumbh *Mela*, one of his friends said, "Go and bring the mobile that is charging; otherwise, we will not keep you with us." I got scared by his words, so I stole that mobile.

Participant 20, age 16 years reported (377 IPC)

"Main pahle apne doston ke sath sirf khata peeta tha. Vo log chori karte the aur mujhe mauj masti karate the. Ek din un logo ne mujhe es target diya purse marne ka. Mujhe bahut dar lag raha tha. Lekin un logo ne mujhe gusse se data aur kaha ki agar ye kaam nahi karoge to dosti khatm. Usi dabav mein aakar maine vo kaam kar diya. Uske baad se to mera dar gayab ho gya (haste huye)."

The participant reported that when he met his friends, he initially just had fun with them, like drinking, smoking, etc. One day, his friends gave him the task of performing antisocial behaviour. They put pressure on him and said that if he didn't do this, their friendship would end. Under that pressure, he did it cleanly and started a career in antisocial behaviour.

Participant 18, age 16 years reported (Abduction and Murder IPC)

"Mujhe aur mere dosto ko rojana nashe ka intjaam karne ki sari jimmedari meri hoti hai. Ham log daru, cigarette, paan gutkha ka hi nasha karte hain. En sab cheezo ko kharidane ke liye paise ki jarurat pura karne ke liye main logo ko dara dhamka kar paisa vasul leta tha, chori karta tha (haste huye)."

The participant said that he is responsible for arranging drugs for the people in his gang. He robs people for this money so that he and his friends can enjoy it.

Participant 15, age 17 years reported (376 IPC)

"Jab tak school mein tah, hamesha maar-peet karta rahta tha, apne liye main kabhi nahi mar-peet ki. Hamesha dosto ke liye hi kiya. Khel mein vivad hone ki vajah se sath mein khelne vale ladko ko mar kar adhmara kar diya tha. Esi vajah se school se naam kat diya"

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gya tha. Tab se padhne hi nahi gya. Doston ke sath maar peet ladai jhagda yahi sab ab mera kaam hai."

The participant said the school environment where he studied was not good; there were always fights. Due to his friends, he was also involved in such antisocial activities. The college administration removed his name from the school because of his indulgence in this type of behaviour. After leaving his school, he started doing more antisocial activities.

DISCUSSION

At present, many types of problems, like poverty, crime, hunger, terrorism, etc., are widespread worldwide. One of the major problems among these is the adolescent's antisocial behaviour. In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that about 1,76,000 murders occur every year among individuals aged 10 to 29 years, which accounts for 37% of the total murders occurring globally every year. According to the World Youth Report (2003), the number of juvenile antisocial adolescents increased from 80 million to 150 million between 1992 and 2000 all over the world. India is not untouched by this international issue. A National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report revealed that in India, in 1995, only 9766 adolescents were involved in antisocial behaviour, but in 2022, their number increased to 30,555. This study focused on the above-mentioned issues. The aim of this study was to investigate the role of peer pressure and the home environment in adolescents' antisocial behaviour. Analysis of qualitative data shows that both factors play an important role in the development of antisocial behavior tendencies in adolescents.

Thematic network analysis revealed that adolescents experience peer pressure regarding substance abuse, theft, molesting girls or intimate relationships, and engaging in violent behaviour. Many studies show that peer pressure plays an important role in determining an adolescent's antisocial behaviour (Ali and Dwyer, 2009; Fletcher, 2012; Lundborg, 2006; Yuksek and Solakoglu, 2016). A lot of research has revealed a robust association between involvement in sexual activities and antisocial behaviour (Beaver et al., 2007; Capaldi et al., 2000; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). As a cause of antisocial behaviour, participants also reported that due to the need for drugs or intoxication, they engage in antisocial behaviour. In a qualitative study, researchers found a positive and significant relationship between drug abuse and adolescents' antisocial behaviour (Pooja et al., 2020). Participants also reported that they commit theft due to peer pressure. Judy and Nelson (2000) reported that peer pressure and involvement in theft prevailed as the strongest correlates of adolescent theft.

The data analysis also revealed that a poor home environment plays a significant role in leading to antisocial behavior among adolescents. Family disputes, broken homes, parental neglect, domestic violence, and substance abuse by parents are the home environmental factors that lead to antisocial behaviour in adolescents. Adolescents who live with a single parent exhibit more antisocial behavior in comparison to adolescents who live with both parents (Apel & Kaukinen, 2008). Parental divorce has been noted as a significant determinant of adolescents' antisocial behaviour (Burt et al., 2008). In a study on 230 participants recruited from broken homes, researchers found that broken homes have a greater impact on adolescents' antisocial behaviour (Singh and Shrama, 1977). Sarantakos (1997) reported that 78% of antisocial adolescents came from families that have a history of physical violence, child abuse, and uninvolved or neglected parenting. Adolescents' involvement in drug abuse or intoxication is associated with family members' drug use or intoxication (Nurco et al., 1999; Keller et al., 2002).

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to explore the role of peer pressure and the home environment in adolescents' antisocial behaviour. Qualitative data in the form of in-depth interviews were collected from the inmates of the observation home. After analyzing the qualitative data with the help of thematic network analysis developed by Braun and Clarke, it was found that family disputes, broken homes, parental neglect, family violence, and substance abuse by parents are the home environmental factors that lead to adolescent's antisocial behaviour; adolescents feel peer pressure for substance abuse, theft, molesting girls/intimate relationships, and violent behaviour. Further results show that in this study, the majority of participants have committed heinous crimes and have low socioeconomic status. In these situations, intervention programs are necessary to stop antisocial behaviour incidents. These findings have implications for the drafting of policies and interventions to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the current study:

1. This study has been done at only one observation home.
2. This study has been done only with male antisocial adolescents.
3. This study focuses on only qualitative data.
4. The sample size of this study is very small.

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Conflict of Interest

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