

ADOLECENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE OPPOSITE- SEX

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ABSTRACT

Puberty is the periods when an adolescence reach physical growth and sexual maturity. It is marked with bodily changes and change in feeling towards opposite sex due to increase in sex hormones. This period starts from late childhood and ends with early adulthood. (12 to 18 years).

In this crucial stage, adolescence is influenced by peer pressure especially the opposite sex peers. This research paper focuses on investigating an adolescence attitude towards the member of opposite sex. The survey method was used to find out students attitude towards each other through questionnaire with multiple choice answers. The result shows that boys have positive attitudes towards girls. Whereas girls has negative attitude towards opposite sex as compared to boys. Such study not only is useful to parents, teachers and psychologists but also gives better understanding to today's adolescence about opposite sex expectations and their preferences.

Keywords: Puberty, Adolescence, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION:

Puberty is a period marked with rapid physical growth leading to sexual maturity and psychological changes. The average onset of puberty is at 10 or 11 for girls and age 12 or 13 for boys. Girls become sexually and physically mature two years earlier than boys. Puberty begins with a surge in hormone production, which in turn causes a number of physical changes. An adolescent acquires secondary sex characteristics. In girls to name some of the secondary sex characteristics are appearance of breast; voice becomes more delicate, spurt in physical structure, beginning of monthly cycle etc. whereas in boy's appearance of beard and moustache, voice becomes rough, sudden growth in height etc. In short, physically a young person develops into an adult. As an adolescent is going through drastic physical changes he or she also goes through psychological, mental and emotional changes. Stanley Hall, well known psychologist, describes this stage as the period full of "storm and stress". This phase is marked with psychologically growing-up. Ericson refers this stage as "Identity Crisis" referring to confusion in identifying oneself neither as a child nor as an adult.

The early and late childhood period boys like to play with boys and girls prefer to be comfortable in the company of girls. Developing relationship with same sex friends and getting their approval and acceptance is one of the important characteristic of interpersonal relationship. The maximum socialization takes place during this stage. But as childhood period end and child enters into an adolescent stage suddenly due to hormonal changes and development of secondary sex characteristics the interest in opposite sex becomes more significant. Suddenly an adolescent becomes self conscious and his outlook changes. He or she becomes conscious towards oneself as well as towards opposite sex. An adolescent spends lot of time looking at himself or herself in the mirror, new look in hair style, preference in clothing and dressing up manners changes, use of cosmetics and interest in looking good increases. Sudden changes occur in improving self image and having better self impression on opposite sex. Girls become shy in the presence of boys where as boys feel embarrassed in the presence of girls.

Along with these physical, mental and psychological changes social changes in interpersonal relationship also occurs. The acceptance by opposite sex members not only gives the feeling of approval and acceptance but also increases confidence into social relationship which in turn becomes the foundation for adult level. An adolescent is sensitive towards their friend's comments on their looks, dress, outfits, social skills and social manners. In turn, it develop either positive or negative attitude towards opposite sex. Good and positive reactions will help to develop positive attitude and vice a versa. These interpersonal relationships make an adolescent independent and give emotional support.

These psychosocial relationships describe the aspects of development that are both psychological as well as social in nature. It includes knowing self, sexuality and development of intimate relationship. Hence, the experts from various disciplines such as psychologist, academics, sociologists, anthropologists, physiologists and even government officials have focus on an adolescent.

RELATED REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

General trend shows that during the period of childhood boys and girls do not show special attraction to the opposite-sex. Boys prefer to play with boys involving greater physical activities such as wrestling, fighting etc. and girls prefer to be with girls. On the onset of puberty there often appears a certain shyness and attraction towards the opposite-sex. Sometimes they are also critical of each other. Some of the findings predict the same results. They are as follows

Sigmund Freud, a well known psychologist, regarded "adolescence as the genital stage of Psychosexuality"

Stanley Hall popularly known as the 'Father of child Psychology in America, described this period as 'flaming youth' and one of 'storm and stress'

Dorothy Rogers describes adolescent's image as youth's detractors and society's image of the adolescent is a somewhat confused montage, varying from the extremely critical to the highly sentimental.

Harries, D.B. and Sing Chu Tseng studied children's attitude towards peers and concluded as:

1. The majority of boys and girls feel favorable towards their peers particularly those of like sex, at every age.
2. In general boys are more neutral in their feelings and boy-girl antipathies are caused by girls

Lester D. Crow & Alice Crow describes in their book that an attitude towards the members of the opposite-sex, girls are supposed to lay stress upon the possession of good looks, brawn rather than brains and a 'Smooth line'. Boys are expected by adults to fall for a 'Cute trick' extreme of dress and make-up, as minimum of intelligence and a tendency to be 'Free & easy'.

They conducted study on 4,900 young adolescents (2,500 girls and 2,360 boys) to discover the attitude and desirable and undesirable qualities in associates of the opposite-sex. Following are the Personality Traits Admired by Members of the Opposite sex (Arranged according to frequency by Lester D. Crow & Alice Crow)

Personality Traits Of Girls Admired By Boys	Personality Traits Of Boys Admired By Girls
Good Personality	Good Personality
Good-looking-beautiful face, dress, and figure.	Good-looking – not necessarily handsome.
Look nice in a bathing suit	Good character
Neatness and cleanliness	Neatness
Helpful to others	Clean and appropriate dress
Consideration for others	Intelligent
Appropriate dress	Good conversationalist
Dependable	Consideration for a girl's wishes
Good talker	Respect for girls – not fresh
Good listener	Willingness to take a girl on dates
Friendliness	Boy to be older than girl
Ability to dance	Good manners
Good manners	Good-natured
Acts her age	Smart in school
Courtesy	Clean-shaved and hair cut
Politeness	Clean-minded
No show-off	Kind, generous, tall
Interest in hobbies of boys	Acts his age
Modest but not shy	Has a sense of humor
Act grown-up, not like a baby	Not too shy
Clean-minded	Honest and fair
Able to take a joke	Respect for rights of girl
	Punctuality
	Not to try to be a big shot
	Able to get along with others
	Has self-control
	The way he kisses
	Good listener

Further, Lester D. Crow & Alice Crow also has listed Personality Traits Disliked by Members of the opposite-Sex (Arranged according to frequency)

Traits Of Girls Disliked By Boys	Traits Of Boys Disliked By Girls
Sloppiness of appearance	Sloppiness of appearance
Overweight or underweight	Boastfulness
Tendency to flirt or “two-time”	Act like big shots
Talk to much	Display poor manners
Extremes of dress	Stinginess
Little regard for money	Being conceited
Too much interest in self	Poorly groomed
Lack of punctuality	Laziness
Snobbishness	Foolish behavior at parties
Too much make-up	Shyness
Sulking and pouting	Smoking excessively
Being conceited	Using bad language
Bites nails	Discourtesy to elders
Smokes and drinks	Talk too much
Giggling or tale bearing	Wants to be center of attention
Inability to dance	Moodiness
Immature behavior	Sponging off other boys
Mingling with a fast crowd	Asking for date at last minute

Lester D. Crow & Alice Crow describes attempts Made by Boys and Girls to Increase Their Popularity with Members of the Opposite-sex (Arranged according to frequency)

Attempts Made by Boys To Impress Girls	Attempts Made by Girls To Impress Boys
Develop good taste in dress	Become careful about appearance
Participate in school activities	Try to be friendly
Avoid annoying habits in school	Develop sincerity
Be considerate of the other person	Be popular with girls also
Develop similar interests	Try not to be catty
Become lively	Not go to expensive places on a date
Be as friendly as possible	Be a good conversationalist
Eliminate all annoying habits	Go in for school activities
Always be dependable	Avoid ridicule of others
Be polite to everyone	Have respect for elders

Howard, B.A. states that real and positive gain comes to both boys and girls as they grow up together in the same school. They are able to work out a better and more enduring relationship; they develop a capacity for intelligent friendship and they find out that friendliness can exist without familiarity, that boys and girls can help each other without wanting to 'flirt' with each other. They also learn both the value and the art of co-operation. There is an instinctive unconscious desire on the part of each sex to be at its best in the presence of others.

Mooney, Ross, L surveyed the problems of high-school students problems by means of a problem check list on 603 students and concluded that the girls at all grade levels led the boys in the mention of problems in the areas of 'home and family' and "Social-Psychological Relations" while the boys led the girls in the areas of "Adjustment to school work" and "The future, Vocational and Educational".

Dixon, Marguerite, M. collected information through questionnaire and interview from 200 girl students' ages 11-18 and found that: Adolescent girls are under the greatest stress between the ages of 14 and 16 when they are beginning to make important contacts outside their families.

Valentine, C.W. reports the tendency of homosexual attraction (as a substitute for normal), was found to be far less in Co-educational schools where the natural relationship between older boys and girls had better chances of developing.

Dunphy, noticed in his study that during middle adolescence, the unisexual cliques begin to break and gradually an individual establishes significant relationship with the members of opposite -sex, a new clique system evolves and group becomes heterosexual.

Ellis gathered a data on attitudes and behavior with relation to love and family relationship, states that love is a learned reaction. Girls who live in small communities with few male contacts have difficulty in falling in love compare to girls from comfortably situated family environment fall in love frequently. Thus, it is apparent that opportunities for a sufficient number of contacts with members of the opposite sex are essential to good heterosexual adjustment.

Valentine, C. W. reports at early puberty they are very critical of one another. The boys regard the girls as soft and weak, and girls think of boys as rough and ill- mannered. They are very critical of one another.

Blair, G. M. & Jones, R. S. state on building and changing attitude of adolescent's interest that, first of all adolescent are interested in himself and is preoccupied with his status, problems and position. The second point is that adolescent have an awakening interest in the opposite sex and want to engage in activities that bring them into contact with boys and girls in their class.

Steinberg, L. quoted Sullivan suggested that establishing healthy intimate relationships during adolescence can have a curative impact for an adolescents who has undergone a moderate degree of psychological ' damage' during childhood.

White, K.M. & Speisman, J. C, reports in adolescent stage first is the phase of 'sexual awakening' both sexes, at approximately 13 o 15 years of age, become aware of their developing sexual potential and second is the phase, at the age of 14 to 17, of 'practicing', characterized by numerous short term relationships with the opposite sex and by irregular dating.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Boys have different attitude toward opposite sex as compared to girls.
2. Boys have more positive attitude towards girls.

METHODOLOGY:

The following research methodology was adopted for the investigation:

A) TYPE OF THE STUDY:

The survey method was used in this research. The survey was focused on adolescent students to find out their attitudes.

B) SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

STUDENTS:

Total eight Junior colleges were chosen and in all 1106 adolescent students from XI & XII standard participated in this research. The sample of students was deliberately selected, as they were easily available and responded to questionnaire enthusiastically and seriously. Not only this, but they were outspoken and related the questions to their subjective problems arising out of their experience.

C) TOOLS:

The tools of investigation included the questionnaire-cum-attitude scale and informal interviews. Hence the data was collected and tabulated was both quantitative and qualitative.

The researcher prepared the questionnaire cum attitude scale and a separate questionnaire for an interview. The responses were obtained on multiple choices. The responses of each question, each option was recorded, tabulated and further statistically analyzed.

CONCLUSION:

1. Boys had a positive attitude towards themselves as compared to girls.
2. Girls had a negative attitude towards the opposite-sex as compared to boys.

SOME INTERESTING COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TOWARDS OPPOSITE SEX:

Researcher would like to add these comments here as adolescent needs an attention and help from social agents of the society like parents, teachers, educationist, counselors and social workers. These comments will also enhance the understanding about adolescent students as well as their thought processes and cognitive development. The important areas like development of interpersonal relationship with opposite sex, friendship, intimate relationship and their social needs. The role of mass media like television, advertisement, serials, movies also play important role on the minds of young one. The following positive and negative comments towards opposite sex are self explanatory.

BOYS ATTITUDE TOWARDS GIRLS:

‘Rave culture penetrating in our culture coupled with increasing adulterous habits, getting inculcated into youth has a very destructive effect on the pupils mind’

‘Girls helps to understand the opposite-sex, make us free and improves our social manners’

‘We can share problems with each other’

‘We can make new friends and develop good relationships’

‘Male friends understand better and there is no jealousy’

‘We can always learn something from the opposite-sex’

‘Talking helps to understand the psychology of girls and in turn helps to behave appropriately’

‘We learn to respect pupils of the opposite-sex’

‘We learn to adjust pupils of the opposite-sex, which is further helpful in life’

‘Some situations give an experience of how miserable and irritating girls are’

‘Interaction with the opposite-sex is definitely helpful in our life’

‘Talking to girls is a pleasure’

‘Men and woman are equally important for the progress of society and to preserve social harmony’

‘Men and woman have different temperament and it is essential for the betterment of society’

‘We come more close to our friends while having discussions or doing teamwork’

‘We have chance to impress girls’

‘An individual knows about the opposite-sex, can share his thoughts and develops a habit of thinking in the right direction’

‘A person tries to be neat, well dressed and alert in the presence of opposite-sex’

'Boys behave properly to create a good image and prestige in front of girls'
'We are cooperative and friendly'
'Presence of girls in the class makes boys behave'
'If presence of girls is taken positively, we are bound to improve our personality, but thinking in the opposite manner may worsen the condition'
'Girls think that they are too smart and superior, and they think that they can get anything. Girls seduce boys in getting their works done, I feel like bashing them on their faces because whenever any problem is created the boys get blamed'
'Sometimes girls change the behavior of the rude boys'
'Bunking of classes is reduced and students become united'
'It is not necessary to have girls in college, as girls are present in society, because of girls boys cannot concentrate on studies'
'Short dresses of girls is an obstacle to our good culture and changes boys thinking and brings bad thoughts'

GIRLS ATTITUDE TOWARDS BOYS:

'Why library and canteen are separate for girls and boys?'
'Boys behavior leads to wrong-steps like suicide'
'I think boys and girls have different ways of thinking and hence they need to be taught in different ways'
'Boys think they are very superior'
'Behavior of boys towards girls makes them feel embarrassed'
'It is sick to see boys and girls behaving cheaply in front of the opposite-sex'
'Boys make lot of noise'
'Girls are very eager to talk to boys'
'They act nonsense, discuss stupid topics, write vulgar things on benches, they are not at all free to talk to boys, it leads to many problems in adolescent age'
'Some boys are very bad'
'We come to understand the attitudes and opinions of the opposite- sex'
'God has made man and woman to help each other'
'Boys are better than girls'
'Boys respect girls more'
'We get a feeling of brotherhood and good friendship too'
'Some boys are smarter and cleverer than us so we get to learn from them'
'Presence of boys makes girls more competitive'
'Boys are more helpful than girls'
'Boys are friendlier than girls'
'We feel secure as there are friends to help in need'
'We come to know boys and their thoughts'
'When people of different sexes meet they discuss and share ideas, which makes interaction much better'
'We understand boys' needs and preferences'
'We learn to accept ways of thinking, shortcomings and strong points'
'It is always a mystery, what goes on the minds of the other sex'
'We girls feel relaxed and free amongst boys'
'No low self-esteem in front of men'
'We feel free and well adjusted with the opposite-sex'
'Males and females cannot behave the way they want'
'Boys are physically present in the class but not mentally'
'Boys behave like street boys'
'Female students do not feel free and boys do not behave properly'
'Presence of the opposite-sex disturbs and distracts females'
'The females experience tension, feel uncomfortable, become more secretive and have more problems'
'Nowadays girls are becoming worse and worse day by day'
'Boys behave in very cheap manner and do not understand'
'Boys do not help in maintaining discipline'
'Girls are in a bad position because of boys'
'Boys just want to tease and chat with the girls'
'I don't like to talk to boys, I hate boys'
'Girls are eager for boys and develop feelings of sexual attraction'

'When we are together they behave properly and when we are with the same sex we tend to behave in a cheap and ill mannered'
'We cannot trust girls more than boys'
'Girls and boys irritate the girls, boys disturb the girls by ragging'
'Problems cannot be discussed in front of boys and there is no guarantee of the boy being good'
'Boys do not understand girls at all & keep torturing girls'
'Girls do not adjust freely with the opposite-sex'
'Boys are not same as they were before. They have become cruel'
'Boys think of themselves as better than girls and always look down at them. They also make fun of girls'
'Boys are selfish and are liars'
'Boys try to share their secrets'
'Girls always fight about minor things, but boys do not care for anything'
'Boys are friendly and we can rely on them. They help us when we are in trouble but girls leave us and go'
'Boys give better advice than girls'
'I don't think it is wrong talking to boys'
'Boys are more helpful than girls and understand us better'
'After all they are part of society and so they can't be neglected'
'We must come to know about the behavior of the opposite sex and several aspects so that we do not to get into trouble and suffer in future life'
'It helps us to talk freely and confidently with everyone'
'We understand the opposite sex well and learn many things about them'
'It is good for both the sexes as we get an opportunity to understand the opposite sex and respect them'
'Sometimes when we are confused, boys create confidence in us'
'Boys encourage us and we get an idea about their lifestyle, which help us to stay better in the society'
'It helps us to understand the world outside and we do not feel embarrassed or ashamed to talk to the opposite-sex'
'It develops good relations with the opposite-sex, neither they are rude nor selfish'
'In the world outside we do not find any difficulty nor are we scared to talk to boys'
'Boys are friendlier and more we enjoy their company'
'We can share joys and sorrows with the opposite-sex too'
'Girls are working now a day and in future they not be just housewives will need to have all round experience'
'Girls can discuss any matter with friends and they don't feel awkward to talk to boys'
'It makes girls familiar with behavior of the boys and their attitude towards boys'
'Boys can freely talk about their nature'
'Boys are more decent in the presence of girls'
'Boys always show the right path, which girls need'

SOME ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH INTERVIEW:

'Girls have lost the considerable respect towards the opposite-sex due to their watching of indecent programmes on the T.V and western culture in general'
'Boys do not pay attention to their studies and indulge in gossip'
'The students of the opposite-sex behave in an inferior manner and use slang language to pose themselves as superior'
'This is a democratic country and girls receive more attention unnecessarily'
'Girls get attention; in the name of women's liberation, they misuse their rights'
'By wearing short skirts, girls think they are attracting boys but this is a wrong way of being attracted towards them'
'Frankness between boys and girls make them vulgar'
'How to behave with the opposite-sex depends on the mindset of a person'
'Wrong models on T.V. and movies spoil the mind of young ones'
'Boys wear chain, bangles and earring to attract girls; they should stop this nonsense because we do not get attracted by such feminine behavior'
'Their interest in college is lost'
'Girls wear short dresses to attract boys, to become center of attraction and show off'
'Boys are vulgar'
'Girls have physical attraction'

'Girls and Boys are spoiled because of fashion, show off and mass media.'
'Boys should help us in the kitchen'
'The behavior of boys is better than the girls. Boys respect girls'
'Because of fashion, boys don't dress up properly and neatly'
'The fashion of girls is spoiling the mentality of the boys'
'Boys are vulgar because of mass media'
'Its merely physical attraction between boys' and girls'
'Girls should have a dress code as we come for the study and not for fashion'
'I try to attract boys and make them jealous'
'Overacting, fashion, attract the attention of girls because of movies'
'Straightforward relationship with the opposite-sex should be allowed'
'It depends on the boy's mentality. Some girls purposely attract boys. They do get attracted'
'Yes. The behavior of the girls is spoiling the mentality of boys. It depends both ways. 50 – 50 %'
'Today's boys are becoming the worst because of media'
'Changing sex-role is sometimes necessary'

THE RESEARCHER'S IMPRESSIONS:

Such surveys should be conducted in order to have insight into adolescent's mind leading to better understanding of their attitudes towards opposite sex. It will also enhance boys and girls to think positive and shed out negative aspects about opposite sex. The techniques adopted by both boys and girls can be modified and can adopt more corrective approach to impress each other. Hoping to emerge in much better, disciplined and well mannered adolescence in this modern society!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To have at least one counselors in each college to help those who have some kind of problem in dealing opposite sex
2. To have better and adjusted happy life one should be given enough opportunity to know each other.
3. Many more such surveys should be conducted to know changing attitude of adolescent.

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