

Research Paper :

Maternal coping strategies for physically and verbally aggressive children

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to study the different studies used by rural and urban mothers to cope with childhood aggression. Total sample consisted of 120 aggressive children in the age group of 4-6 years and their mothers. The results showed that in urban and rural areas, boys were more physically aggressive while girls were more verbally aggressive. In urban and rural areas, mothers of aggressive children used six different strategies to cope with physical and verbal aggression of their children.

Key words : Childhood aggression, Structuring, Power assertion, Psychological controlling, Supportive

Aggression manifests itself in child's behaviour from early years. Aggressive behaviours tend to be highly stable from early childhood to adolescence and adulthood (Waldman, 1996). In pre-school years, the childhood aggression is an important predictor of difficulties in social adjustment, delinquency (Hay *et al.*, 2000) and psychological dysfunction (McFayden-Ketchum *et al.*, 1996). Highly aggressive behaviour often occurs along and may be predictive of poor academic performance and increased risk of dropping out of school (Rubin *et al.*, 1998).

Aggression in childhood and later ages can be related to problem behaviour in future. The possibilities for intervention, to curb (may be to just an extent) aggression and violence, would surely be increased if one could identify younger children who are already showing precursors to behaviour problems.

"Aggression is that behaviour that is intended to hurt or harm others" (Crick and Grotpeter, 1995). According to Baron (1985), aggression is any form of behaviour directed towards the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment. According to Crick *et al.* (1996), anger and intent to harm have been two defining features of aggression. Shaw *et al.* (2000) described early aggressive behaviour as an "act directed toward a specific other person or object with intent to hurt or frighten, for which there is a consensus about the aggressive intent of the act."

Parenting styles and child rearing practices are often linked to child's behaviour. Punishment, which is often considered a deterrent to aggressive behaviour, is an

important component of parenting styles. Research gives evidence that parents of under controlled aggressive children are highly directive, intrusive and rejecting (Rubin *et al.*, 1996). Not only this, they have been found to be highly punitive and critical with their children (Berk, 1994).

Mother is considered to be the most important figure for child and also forms one of most influential socialization agents in early life. Mother's beliefs about child rearing and socialization are largely reflected in her behaviour and reaction towards children.

So, keeping the above facts in view, the study on childhood aggression was taken into consideration with the objective to study the strategies used by urban and rural mothers to deal with childhood aggression.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted purposively in rural and urban areas of Hisar District of Haryana State. Urban study was conducted in Hisar city and rural study was conducted in block-II of Hisar District.

From Hisar city, three schools were selected randomly. The schools were selected through purposive convenient sampling. These schools were private English medium, co-educational, medium fee charging and catering to middle socio-economic strata. Finally a list of 60 children from Hisar city was prepared.

Similarly from rural area, three pre-schools were selected from village Kaimari. These 03 pre-schools were co-educational and private English/Hindi medium. Thus, 35 aggressive children were selected from the village Kaimari.