



NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP AND CONNECTEDNESS AMONG YOUTH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ANDHRA PRADESH AND KERALA STATES

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Humans are intrinsically ‘socially connected’ beings and the development of close friendships, friendship cliques and the wider school/college ‘peer group ecology’ are critical aspects of most young people’s maturing social development, and personal and social identities. The research studies have demonstrated the strong link between adolescent social identity and a diverse range of health behaviours such as self-injury, substance use, victimization and violence. For example, teenagers who strongly identify with marginalised youth subcultures (Chavs or Nerds) are seven times more likely to regularly experience alcohol-related problems and nearly three times more likely to be physically attacked or hurt. While those who identify as alternative youth are four times more likely to self-injure and six times more likely to attempt suicide, with some evidence of peer contagion. How universal these peer identity effects are remains unknown. There is also growing recognition of the long-term effect that physical and relational bullying, physical and verbal sexual harassment has on psychological wellbeing and other health behaviours. However, identifying which group of adolescents will develop which type of health problems and which form of victimisation (verbal, physical, cyber) is most harmful remains unclear. The effect of different peer and school/college ecologies on these forms of violence is also a focus of interest. While the influence of peers fluctuates over the life course, it has a strong effect on many health behaviours, particularly mental health, and interacts with (opposing or reinforcing) family influences. For example, the clash between parents and teenagers about their choice of style, music and ‘inappropriate’ peers and/or boy/girlfriends is widely recognised in popular culture.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College Health Association estimate that 1 in 500 college students are infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV infection usually develops into Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Researchers have conducted many studies to determine whether the threat of HIV infection causes college students to alter risky behaviors. Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem to. Studies indicate that increased knowledge of HIV/AIDS does not always result in a positive behavior change. It is estimated that at least half of all new HIV infections in the U.S. are among people under the age of 25.

The nature of friendship and kind of friends involved in relation, their interested activities, type of people in place of meeting, challenges and betting’s usually determine the type of the unruly behavior of youth.

Hence, in the present study focus was culminated on ascertaining the nature of friendship/ connectedness and how they are behaving in working and leisure hours.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study was to ascertain and analyze the nature of friendship and connectedness among Male Youth.

METHOD AND AREA

The study was conducted on a comparative basis between Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states. The study was organized in two urban localities in each state including Tirupati & Vijayawada from Andhra Pradesh and Trivendrum and Trissur from Kerala State.

The school and college going Male Youth below the age of 25 years were the respondents for the study.



Research Paper

DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected using pre-prepared interview schedule. The data was collected by 4 field investigators from each city who was well trained on interview techniques. From each city 150 youth were selected for the study and thus the total sample for the study was as 300 youth from Andhra Pradesh and 300 from Kerala, and totally 600 samples.

FRIEND SHIP/ CONNECTEDNESS

College student/youth are the most sexually active and at the same time more risk group. Factors such as peer pressures, lack of maturity and alcohol and drug use put youth at high risk for HIV infection. Studied youth appear to be very knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, but in fact very few of them practice safe sex. There is much evidence that the friendship/connectedness is the base for a) Identifying the sexual partners, b) Choosing the space and time for sex, c) Discussions which increase sexual urge, which ultimately throw the youth in to risk.

Hence, in this chapter much focus is given on the matters related to friendship and connectedness.

A. Duration of stay at outside the family

Duration of stay of youth outside the home is presented in table- 1

Table -1. Duration of Stay At outside of the Family

Duration of stay at outside of the family :: Hostel				
		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
2 years	N	65	79	144
	%	35.70%	34.30%	35.00%
2-3 years	N	14	28	42
	%	7.70%	12.20%	10.20%
3-4 years	N	29	36	65
	%	15.90%	15.70%	15.80%
4+	N	74	87	161
	%	40.70%	37.80%	39.10%
Total	N	182	230	412
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Majority of youth both in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala stayed for a duration of 4 and above years outside the family perceiving for higher studies (40% and 37%). The second largest group stayed for 2 years outside the family (35% in Andhra Pradesh and 34% in Kerala). Another 15% each in both the states spent 3-4 years outside and the remaining 7% in Andhra Pradesh and 12% in Kerala stayed for a period of 2 to 3 years outside home.

B. No. of Friends

The no. of friends as reported by study youth in Andhra Pradesh & Kerala is presented in table 2

Table -2. No. of Friends

No. of friends		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
2 friends	N	60	43	103
	%	20.00%	14.30%	17.20%
3 friends	N	103	102	205
	%	34.30%	34.00%	34.20%
4 friends	N	137	155	292
	%	45.70%	51.70%	48.70%
Total	N	300	300	600
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



Every one of the sample youth are having friendship and some of them confined to 2 friends (20% in Andhra Pradesh and 14% in Kerala) another group are having 3 friends and others are having more than 4+ friends.

C. Close Friends

The no. of close friends as reported by youth in Andhra Pradesh & Kerala is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Close Friends

close friends to discuss personal/ sexual matters				
Close friends		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
1 friend	N	103	128	231
	%	34.30%	42.70%	38.50%
2friends	N	109	107	216
	%	36.30%	35.70%	36.00%
3 friends	N	88	65	153
	%	29.30%	21.70%	25.50%
Total	N	300	300	600
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Majority of youth in both the states had one close friend to discuss personal and sexual matters (74% in Andhra Pradesh and 42% in Kerala). The second largest group are having 2 friends in this regard (36% and 35%) and the remaining 29% in Andhra Pradesh and 21% in Kerala are having 3 friends to discuss personal or sexual matters.

D. Frequency of Meeting Friends

Table .4 provide the frequency of meetings of sample with their close friends.

Table .4. Frequency of Meeting Friends

Frequency of meeting friends		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Daily	N	111	129
	%	37.70%	43%
Weekly once	N	90	49
	%	30.00%	22.00%
Occasionally	N	99	122
	%	33.30%	40.70%
	N	300	300
	%	100.00%	100.00%

The frequency of meetings differ between Andhra Pradesh and Kerala as 37.7% are meeting daily in Andhra Pradesh, and this figure is more in Kerala i.e.43%. Regarding weekly once meetings, it is more in Andhra Pradesh (30%) compared to Kerala (16.3%). The occasional meetings are more in Kerala (40.7%) compared to that of Andhra Pradesh (33.3%).

E. First Contact on Sexual Problem

The samples were probed to inform with whom they first contacted, when they got sexual problem, and the information is presented in table no.5.



Table .5 First Contact after Getting Sex Related Problem

First contact		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
Family members	N	26	33	59
	%	8.70%	11.00%	9.80%
Relatives	N	10	3	13
	%	3.30%	1.00%	2.20%
Male friend	N	155	148	303
	%	51.70%	49.30%	50.50%
Female friends	N	3	10	13
	%	1.00%	3.30%	2.20%
Doctor	N	53	86	139
	%	17.70%	28.70%	23.20%
None	N	53	20	73
	%	17.70%	6.70%	12.20%
Total	N	300	300	600
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Apparently nearly half of the youth in both the state’s first contacted their male friend (51% in Andhra Pradesh & 49% in Kerala) when they first got sex related problem. The second largest group contacted is doctors (28% in Kerala and 17% in Andhra Pradesh). Only a few of the sample contacted family members in this regard (11% in Kerala and 8% in Andhra Pradesh), and very negligible numbers contacted relatives and girlfriend in this regard. It is crucial to notice that 17% in Andhra Pradesh and 6% in Kerala didn’t contact anybody when they first got sexual problem. This shows the negligence.

A. Friendship with Girls

- a) The respondents were asked to say whether they got friend ship with girls and the information was presented in table 6.

Friendship with girls		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
Yes	N	214	243	457
	%	71.30%	81.00%	76.20%
No	N	86	57	143
	%	28.70%	19.00%	23.80%
Total	N	300	300	600
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

It is crucial to notice that most of youth (71%) in Andhra Pradesh and 81% in Kerala are having friendship with girls. The remaining 28% in Andhra Pradesh and 19% in Kerala had no girlfriends.

b) Location /Group of Girl Friend

The youth are farther probed to inform to which locality or group their girlfriends belong and the responses are tabulated below.



Table No-7. Location /Group of Girl Friend

Locality of girl friends		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Class mate	N	84	123
	%	39.3%	50.67%
College mate	N	59	64
	%	27.5%	26.3%
Belongs to same locality	N	9	21
	%	14.0%	8.6%
Family friendship	N	41	35
	%	19.2%	14.4%
Total	N	214	243
	%	100.00%	100.00%

Just above half of the respondents in Kerala (50.6%) had girl friends from their class mates, and same in Andhra Pradesh was 39.3%. The second largest sample had their girlfriends from their own college mates (27% in Andhra Pradesh and 26% in Kerala). The third largest group had their girl’s friends from among family friend ship (19% and 14%) and the remaining had close girlfriends from their own locality (14% & 18%).

c) Frequency of Meeting with Girl Friends

The respondents are requested to inform the frequency of meetings with their girlfriends and the finding was given in table 8

Table .8 Frequency of Meeting with Girlfriends

Frequency of meeting with girl friends		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
Daily	N	49	71	100
	%	22.90%	29.02%	21.90%
Weekly once	N	28	39	67
	%	13.10%	16.00%	14.70%
Occasionally	N	137	133	290
	%	64.00%	54.7%	63.50%
Total	N	214	243	457
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The frequency of meeting girlfriends is slightly more in Kerala as 29% of youth meet every day, while it was 22% in Andhra Pradesh. Regarding meeting once in a week with girlfriend, it is 16% in Kerala and 13% in Andhra Pradesh. However occasional meeting with girlfriend is more in Andhra Pradesh (64%) than that in Kerala (54.7%).

d) Activity during meeting with girl friends

Table-9. Activity during Meeting with Girl Friends

Activity during meeting with girl friends		STATE		Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	
Study together	N	27	37	59
	%	12.60%	15.4%	12.90%
Doubts clarification	N	17	17	34



	%	7.90%	6.1%	7.40%
Go to picnic	N	14	18	23
	%	6.5%	7.6%	5.00%
gossip/chatting	N	86	99	147
	%	40.19%	40.7%	32.20%
love actions	N	70	71	102
	%	32.7%	29.4%	22.30%
Total	N	214	243	457
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The activity for majority of youth during their meeting with girlfriends is ‘gossip/chatting in both the states (40.1%) & (40.7%). The second largest group are involving in ‘love actions’ which involves kissing, hugging, laughing etc., Some youth are preferring to ‘study together’ while meeting with girlfriends (12% in Andhra Pradesh and 15% in Kerala) and certain other) are said to be involving in ‘doubt clarification’ during meet with girlfriends. The remaining 6.5% youth in Andhra Pradesh and 7.6% youth in Kerala preferred to go for “Picnic” when they meet girlfriends.

e) E-mail ID

(a) No. of sample having E-mail ID

The youth were probed to state whether they are having E-mail ID or not and the response is given below.

Table. 10: Having E-mail ID

Having E-mail ID		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Yes	N	178	205
	%	60.0%	68.3%
No	N	122	95
	%	40.0%	31.7%
Total	N	300	300
	%	100.00%	100.00%

An overwhelming proportion of youth in both states i.e 60% in Andhra Pradesh and 68% in Kerala are having own Email-Id. The remaining also told that they try to have E-mail ID very soon. Since sample is from urban location, the e-mail id is most popular.

(b) E-mail Brand

The email brand used by youth is presented below.

Table .11 E-mail Brands

Email brand		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Yahoo	N	10	6
	%	5.6%	2.9%
Gmail	N	154	188
	%	84.0%	91.7%
Hotmail	N	8	5
	%	4.49%	2.43%
Rediff mail	N	6	6
	%	3.3%	2.92%
Total	N	178	205



	%	100.00%	100.00%
Use of Apps			
Whatsup	N	122	134
	%	40.6%	44.6%
Skype	N	40	62
	%	13.3%	20.7%
Viber	N	52	56
	%	17.3%	18.7%
Others/ Non Users	N	86	48
	%	28.6%	16%
Total	N	300	300
	%	100.00%	100.00%

‘Gmail’ is the most preferred email id in both the states as more than 80% accepted it. The other email ids preferred are as following a) Yahoo (5.6% & 2.9) , Hotmail (4.49% & 2.4%) and Rediffmail (3.3% & 2.9%).

With regard to use of Apps, whatsapp is found to be more popular as 40.6% in Andhra Pradesh and 44.6% in Kerala are adopted to it. The second preferred apps was viber in Andhra Pradesh 17%, and skype in Kerala 20.7%.

f. Location to watch Internet service

The youth are asked to inform their preferred location to watch internet service and the response is tabulated below

Table -12. Location to Watch Internet Service

Location		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
School/college	N	35	29
	%	13.00%	13.00%
Home	N	96	45
	%	35.60%	40.3%
Internet café	N	112	76
	%	41.50%	34%
Friend’s house	N	27	23
	%	10.00%	10.30%
Total	N	270	276
	%	100.00%	100.00%

The majority of youth are watching email at internet café in Andhra Pradesh (41.5%) followed by 35.6% at home. The case is reverse in Kerala as 34% are watching in cafes and 42% are watching at home. The other place preferred to watch email was college (13% both in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala) and friends home (10% and 10.3%). Since, only a few are watching internet services in college, efforts are to be initiated to start internet hubs near hostels.

g. Time spending on Internet

Table .13 Times Spent to Watch Internet Service

Time spending on Internet		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
One hour	N	161	140
	%	59 %	50.72%
two hours	N	61	97



	%	22.60%	33.3%
Three hours and more	N	48	44
	%	17.80%	15.94%
Total	N	270	276
	%	100.00%	100.00%

More than half of the youth in both Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are spending one hour per day on Internet services (59% in Andhra Pradesh & 50% Kerala). The second largest group of 33% in Kerala and 22.6% in Andhra Pradesh are spending two hours on internet and the remaining 17.8% in Andhra Pradesh 15.9% in Kerala are spending more than 3 hours on internet services.

h. Type of Programme Watching on Internet

The youth are further probed to spell out the type of programmes they normally watch on internet and the responses are tabulated.

Table -14. Type of programme watch regularly through internet

Type of programmes watching in internet		STATE	
		Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Orkut	N	9	9
	%	3.30%	4.00%
Sports	N	24	36
	%	8.8%	16.10%
News	N	27	31
	%	10.00%	11.3%
Pornography	N	20	15
	%	7.40%	6.70%
Youtube	N	65	37
	%	24%	16.60%
Email	N	125	157
	%	46.30%	56.8%
Total	N	270	276
	%	100.00%	100.00%

Around half of the youth in both states preferred to watch ‘email’ on internet service (45% in Andhra Pradesh & 56.8% in Kerala). The second largest group prefers ‘YouTube’ i.e 24% in Andhra Pradesh and 16% in Kerala. ‘News’ was watched on internet by 10% Andhra Pradesh and 11.37 in Kerala. Pornography was watched by 7.4% in Andhra Pradesh and 6.7% in Kerala. The sports programmes are watched by 8.8% in Andhra Pradesh and 16.1% in Kerala on internet. The ‘orkut’ was the programme watched by least proportion of youth in both Andhra Pradesh & Kerala (3.3% in Andhra Pradesh & 4% in Kerala).

It is good that only 7% in both the states are interested on pornography and many are showing interest on email both in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

i. Owning of articles

The type of articles owned by youth is presented in table 15.

Type of articles owned

Sl.No	Articles		Andhra Pradesh		Total	Kerala		Total
			Yes	No		Yes	No	
A	Two wheeler	N	166	134	300	191	109	300
		%	55.30	44.70	100	63.70	36.30	43
B	Mobile	N	276	24	300	290	10	300



Research Paper

		%	9.2	8.9	100	96.7	3.3	100
C	Bi cycle	N	149	151	300	131	169	300
		%	49.70	50.30	100	43.70	56.30	100
D	Radio/tape recorder	N	213	87	300	231	69	300
		%	71.00	29.00	100	77.00	23.00	100
F	Computer	N	155	145	300	172	128	300
		%	51.70	48.30	100	57.30	42.70	100
G	Car	N	15	285	300	279	21	300
		%	5.00	95	100	93	7	100

The type of articles owned by youth indirectly indicates their desires and economic status. Mobile phone is the most popular and owned by 92% in Andhra Pradesh and 96/7% Kerala. The second most desirable thing to youth is motorcycle and owned by 55% in Andhra Pradesh and 63% in Kerala. Computer is also most wanted article for 51% in Andhra Pradesh and 57% in Kerala. But car is owned by a few youth i.e.5% in Andhra Pradesh and 7% in Kerala.

j. Activities with Male Friends

The different activities the youth perform with their male friends is given below.

Table - 16. Activities with male friends

Sl.No	What activities you do along with you friends		Andhra Pradesh		Total	Kerala		Total
			Yes	No		Yes	No	
A	Group study	N	190	110	300	165	135	300
		%	63.30	36.70	100	55.00	45.00	100
B	Spend time	N	250	50	300	189	111	300
		%	83.30	16.70	100	63.00	37.00	100
C	Play sports	N	251	49	300	202	98	300
		%	83.70	16.30	100	67.30	32.70	100
D	Wander in the streets	N	184	116	300	96	204	300
		%	61.30	38.70	100	32.00	68.00	100
E	Drink/gamble	N	68	232	300	52	248	300
		%	22.70	77.30	100	17.30	82.70	100
F	Go to picnic	N	193	107	300	151	149	300
		%	64.30	35.70	100	50.30	49.70	100
G	Go to cinemas	N	269	31	300	251	49	300
		%	89.70	10.30	100	83.70	16.30	100

Regarding activities usually perform with friends, ‘spending time’ is preferred by majority in Andhra Pradesh (83%) and sporting is preferred by majority in Kerala (67%). Play sports is also popular in Andhra Pradesh (83.7%). ‘go to cinema’ is desired by many both in Andhra Pradesh & Kerala(89% & 83%). The other activities preferred in Andhra Pradesh are ‘group study’ (63%) as against 55% in Kerala, wander in the streets (61%) in Andhra Pradesh as against 32% in Kerala. ‘Go to picnic’ is also preferred by more than half in both the states. The crucial one of drinking/gamble is preferred by 22% in Andhra Pradesh and 17% in Kerala.



k. Membership in Social Groups

The membership of youth in social clubs/groups denotes their interest in social activities. This aspects is presented in table 17.

Table -17. Membership in Social Groups

Sl.No	Membership in social group		Andhra Pradesh		Total	Kerala		Total
			Yes	No		Yes	No	
A	Not member in any registered/formal group	N	210	90	300	226	74	300
		%	70.00	30.00	100	75.30	24.70	100
B	S H G	N	4	296	300	0	300	300
		%	1.30	98.70	100	0.00	100.00	100
C	Lions club	N	5	295	300	0	300	300
		%	1.70	98.30	100	0.00	100.00	100
D	Sports club	N	17	283	300	32	268	300
		%	5.70	94.30	100	10.70	89.30	100
E	Nehru yuvak Kendra	N	1	299	300	11	289	300
		%	0.30	99.70	100	3.70	96.30	100
F	Informal group	N	9	291	300	2	298	300
		%	3.00	97.00	100	0.70	99.30	100

Many of the youth in both states are not members in any registered /formal group (70% in Andhra Pradesh and 75% in Kerala). Some of the youth are members in sports clubs (5.7% in Andhra Pradesh & 10.7% in Kerala). The membership in other organizations is very minimum which shows the non-interest of youth in social organizations.

The overall finding on nature of friendship/ connectedness didn't indicate worse situation in both the states. The habit of having alcoholic drinks and watching pornography and wandering in streets wasting time wasn't observed among many youth in the study which is an encouraging aspect.