

## ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTION OF PEER PRESSURE AND ITS IMPACT ON CAREER CHOICES: A STUDY IN RANCHI

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study emphasizes how peer pressure influences decisions over careers in a vastly sociocultural diverse society, focusing on the attitude of adolescence in the Ranchi region toward it and whether it impinges upon their career choices. Peer groups play an excellent part in adolescence-an essential identity development and career exploration period-and can have either a good or bad influence on career objectives. The study examines the perception of young people from different ethnic backgrounds residing in the urban and rural settings of Ranchi regarding peer influence in career choices, at what level they are influenced, and its effects on their long-term goals. The study considers gender and social status as well as the educational setting to be plausible reasons explaining why adolescence behave in reaction to peer influence. The study used a descriptive research approach and stratified random sampling along with a structured questionnaire to examine 180 adolescence. According to the findings, respondents' levels of peer pressure varied by gender, with boys feeling a bit more pressure than girls. They also showed disparities in career inclinations. The findings highlight the need to have career counselling programs designed based on different socioeconomic, cultural, and gender differences, among other considerations, as well as require an understanding of how peer influence may either open or close off spaces for exploring careers.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents' Perception, Peer Pressure, Career Choices, Ranchi District.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most intimidating stages of life, adolescence can be attributed as the identification phase, exploration, and slow development of future goals. In many respects, selection of a career is one of the most significant decisions adolescents make because it determines their educational path, personal growth, and subsequent success in the long run. These are hardly ever made in a vacuum because of the social pressures given the close quarters and intimacy of classmates, family, and school. Peer groups being so critical to the life of a teenager, can become the most potent influences in decisions, views and self-concepts. Specifically, peer pressure is the extremely effective social force which leads most adolescence towards certain attitudes, behaviors and sometimes, towards professional goals. Peer pressure can have both positive and negative influence but, in any case, it forms a complex and multi-dimensional effect on career choices since it leaves Adolescents feeling forced to do something for their friends rather than what would actually make them happy. Peer pressure is becoming an emerging problem in influencing teenage career choices, more so in developing countries where socioeconomic factors may deny access to career counseling and support networks.

The Ranchi region of the eastern Indian state Jharkhand is an example context, in which study regarding the phenomenon can be made. The environment under which a choice of employment is made by an adolescent is tough in Ranchi with a coexistence of established norms and new goals, defined by an urban and rural population. Cultural standards, academic rivalry, and lack of exposure to variety in pathways of employment can all determine peer pressure in such an environment. Like in most other parts of India, adolescents in Ranchi often are caught between their interests and the social norms their peer groups maintain. This paper explores the understanding of peer pressure by adolescence in the Ranchi district in relation to how it impacts their decisions regarding careers. It specifically tries to find out how adolescence understand peer pressure vis-à-vis the decisions that they make in regard to their career, to what extent they feel that their peers have influenced them in this process, and how such pressure may influence their long-term goals.

The teenage minds' ability to decide may be influenced much by their capacity to identify and handle pressures from peers. Thus, these perspectives must be understood. From their pressure due to peer influences, adolescents may not accept unusual career paths as it would force them to be oriented towards acceptability by peers rather than being interested in themselves. Conversely, peer settings can promote the ability to pursue positively their leisure activities and career and selection of decisions based on skill and objective. From such characteristics, this research study aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of factors that influence the decision-making of youth in regards to their career options in Ranchi and accordingly identifies the strategy that could be useful in enabling them to take more independent and informed choices.

## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

**Singh et al. (2022)** surveyed veterinary students at three schools connected to the Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS) in Bikaner, Rajasthan, to find out what careers they were interested in. 150 people took part in the study, and data was gathered through in-person interviews, phone calls, and emails following a semi-structured interview plan. With a mean score of 2.69, the results showed that the people who answered wanted to work for the government as veterinary officers. After that, roles of research scientists got an average score of 2.50 and roles of assistant teachers got an average score of 2.51. On the other hand, political careers got the lowest score from the respondents, with a mean score of 1.55. These results showed that veterinary students want to work in the public sector in safe and respected careers. This is similar to how medical and scientific workers generally choose their careers.

**Gürdoğan et al. (2023)** studied how the COVID-19 pandemic affected nursing students' choices about what they wanted to do with their lives. From March to June 2021, first-year nursing students took part in their cross-sectional and detailed study. 75.4% of the students who took part in the study said that the pandemic had no effect on their career choices. Fourteen percent of those who answered had already planned to become nurses before the pandemic. Fifty-two percent chose the career because they liked it. Multiple regression analysis showed that fear of COVID-19, having family members with chronic illnesses, intrinsic motivation towards the career, and how important the profession is seen to society are all important factors that affect career choices. Importantly, family and friends also had a big impact on the choices that students made. Even though the pandemic caused problems, the results showed that it also strengthened the goals and desires of many nursing students.

**Adams et al. (2022)** led a focus through LVCT Health, a Kenyan non-profit group that focusses on HIV testing, care, and prevention. 122 people from three hospital sites in Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa that are connected to LVCT Wellbeing were asked to take part in the study. All-around meetings were held with young people living with HIV (ALHIV, n = 12), as well as centre groups with peer leaders (n = 3), Adolescents getting HIV services in local settings regardless of their HIV status (n = 3), and people living with HIV (n = 5). The information was gathered from interviews, records, and sound recordings. It was then subjected to current research, with a focus on power and shame. Youths getting HIV care had to deal with shame and problems sticking to their treatment plans. However, strength factors that helped them deal with shame came up in the meetings of ALHIV and, to some extent, peer pioneers. There were four main themes that came up: a positive facility environment encouraged ongoing commitment to HIV care among Adolescents; information and goals for the future motivated people living with HIV to maintain their health; sharing information with others created supportive communities for people living with HIV; and medication-taking procedures and important exposure

helped people living with HIV deal with problems related to adherence.

**Rath et al. (2020)** emphasized that improving the health and growth of 10–19-year-olds should be a top goal for global health, pointing out that one in five adolescence in the world live in India. The study talked about Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), India's national plan for the health of adolescence. The goal of RKSK was to give neighborhood peer educators the tools they needed to lead group discussions with both boys and girls. The goal of these groups was to help Adolescents deal with health and social problems that affected them while also helping them learn how to be leaders and get involved in their communities. The article showed a review of the Jharkhand Initiative for Adolescent Health (JIAH), a local area-based mediation program partnered with RKSK that aimed to improve the mental health, school attendance, and diet diversity of adolescence girls in the eastern Indian province of Jharkhand.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

In order to determine how adolescence in the Ranchi region perceive peer pressure and how it influences their choices of careers, this study was undertaken by using a descriptive research approach. The design was made for the analysis of the present situation and any potential relationships that exist between the career decision-making of adolescents and peer pressure, especially as influenced by sociocultural elements in the tribal environment. The study aims at extracting views from Adolescents and evaluating how peer pressure impacts the decisions and career goals of these Adolescents.

#### **3.2. Sample Size**

For this research, 180 Adolescents were taken for the study. To ensure a fair number of boys and girls in order to get equal equity in career interest and similar experience with peer pressure, this sample is divided into half, consisting of 90 boys and 90 girls each. To control for regional differences of experiencing peer pressure, the sample is equally representative from the rural and urban settings. The sample also represents the ethnic and cultural diversity of Ranchi district by including in the sample Sarna and Christian, tribal adolescence.

#### **3.3. Method of Sampling**

This study employed the use of stratified random sampling. The population was stratified along gender, religion, and urban/rural residence. Adolescents in that population are then selected as a stratified random sample from all the stratum for both to be able to determine representation in the sample of the population. Through such stratification, in-depth analysis of the experience with peers in pressure and preference for career becomes possible across the subgroups of the population.

#### **3.4. Data Collection Tools**

A well-structured questionnaire is the core tool to collect data for the study. Questions closed-ended as well as open-ended questions are there to calculate the feeling of the adolescence toward peer pressure and whether it influences their decisions with respect to careers. This questionnaire is divided into these sections.

- **Demographic Information:** Questions about age, gender, religion, and place of residence are taken to prepare the demographic profile of the respondents.
- **Career Preferences:** This test about the desired fields of adolescence' profession contains multiple-choice questions in several categories like mass media, artistic design, medicine, etc.
- **Peer Pressure:** This section uses a Likert scale to measure the peer pressure that an adolescent feels in different settings like social, academic, and professional.
- **Impact of Peer Pressure:** Open-ended questions have scrutinized how the impact of peer pressure has affected career choices, and what would be considered important while selecting a career.

The questionnaires are conducted by self-administered surveys and face-to-face interviews so that it can ensure clarity in responses and possible clarifications as well.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

##### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Categories	Sub-Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Distribution	14 years	45	25%
	15 years	45	25%
	16 years	45	25%
	17 years	45	25%
Gender Distribution	Boys	90	50%
	Girls	90	50%

<b>Religion Distribution</b>	Sarna	90	50%
	Christian (Tribal)	90	50%
<b>Place of Residence</b>	Rural	90	50%
	Urban	90	50%
<b>Total</b>		180	100%

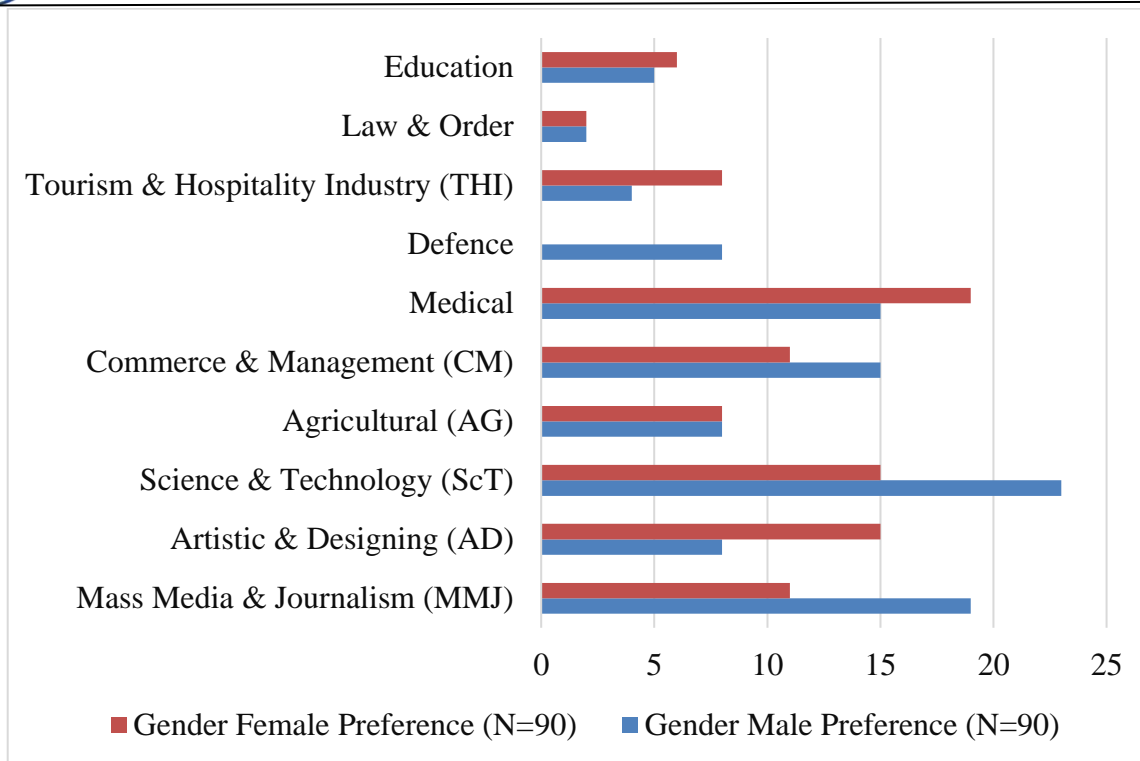
Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the study sample of 180 adolescents spread in equal number of categories. The age group, which was subdivided into four (14, 15, 16 and 17 years) is evenly spread within the sample with a total of 45 respondents in each age category, thus indicating that the age range is spread evenly. To achieve gender parity in the study, the distribution of gender is also balanced with 50% of the 90 respondents being boys while the other 50% are girls. The sample reflects diversification among the tribal tribes, which accounts to half of the Sarna adolescents (90) and the other half Christian, that is, (Tribal) adolescents (90). On the basis of residence, the subject is evenly divided as 90 from rural background and 90 from urban background by guaranteeing comprehensive coverage both from these backgrounds. This demographic distribution is relatively level across these categories, providing a balanced sample to be studied on peer influence and aspirations for employment among adolescence in the tribal context.

## 4.2. Comparison of Career Preferences by Gender

**Table 2:** Comparison of Career Preferences by Gender

Career Area	Gender		Total (N=180)
	Male Preference (N=90)	Female Preference (N=90)	
Mass Media & Journalism (MMJ)	19	11	30
Artistic & Designing (AD)	8	15	23
Science & Technology (ScT)	23	15	38
Agricultural (AG)	8	8	16
Commerce & Management (CM)	15	11	26
Medical	15	19	34
Defence	8	0	8
Tourism & Hospitality Industry (THI)	4	8	12
Law & Order	2	2	4
Education	5	6	11
<b>Total</b>	90	90	180





**Figure 1:** Graphical presentation of Comparison of Career Preferences by Gender

Table 2 as follows depicts 180 youths view; 90 males and 90 females, and their career interests were compared. In Mass Media & Journalism, men have a higher preference in that 19 out of 30 more than women with 11. there are 23 preferences within the AD sector, 15 female choices and 8 male choices. There are 38 preferences in total in the ScT category; males dominate with 23 preferences, while females have less interest with 15. There are eight preferences each showing interest in agriculture with both genders, for a total of 16. Males show interest in 15 preferences more than females with 11 for a total of 26 preferences with CM. There are 34 options; women have a greater interest in the medical sector than men, at 19 and 15, respectively. There is indeed a gender gap in defense with 8 men having an interest but no females showing any preference at all, resulting in a total of 8 preferences. At a total of 12 options, there are more chances of women favoring THI (8) over (4) men. There are hardly any respondents with an interest in education and law and order, and there is hardly any gender-specific disparities at large. Overall, there seems to be an indication that women are more likely to pursue arts and design and medicine as careers, while the males dominate the preferences for science and technology and defense-oriented careers. Such gender-specific preferences can be imparted into

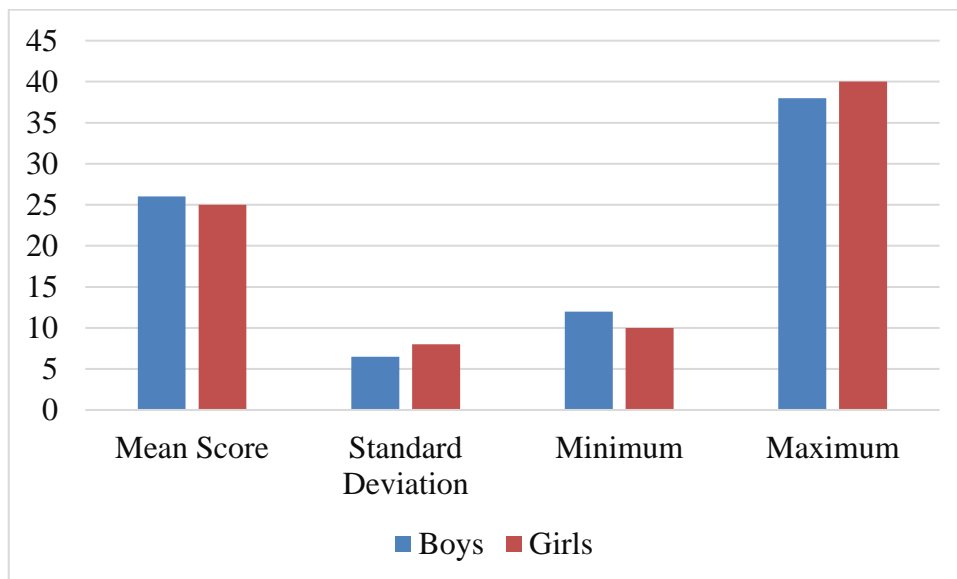


adolescent career counselling programs and well used by tribal societies.

### 4.3. Analysis of Peer Pressure by Gender

**Table 3: Peer Pressure Scores by Gender**

Gender	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Boys</b>	90	26.0	6.5	12	38
<b>Girls</b>	90	25.0	8.0	10	40
<b>Total</b>	180	25.5	7.5	10	40



**Figure 2: Graphical presentation of Peer Pressure Scores by Gender**

Table 3 distribution of the 180 respondents based on their experience of having been under peer pressure. Of the total number, 90 are male and 90 girls. Boys are somewhat more likely to be under peer pressure than girls are - 26.0 as against 25.0 mean scores while both genders are reported as experiencing peer pressure. This would suggest that though both genders have suffered from peer pressure, boys experience it much more intensely. The rather low standard deviation of 6.5 for boys may suggest that most boys believe that they are under about the same amount of peer pressure. Though girls vary strongly in the degree to which they feel themselves under greater peer pressure than others, the girls' standard deviation is 8.0, implying that females experienced a wider range. There is a fair range of encounters among boys with respect to the experiences of peer pressure wherein the minimum score of 12, maximum score of 38 has been reported. While the minimum score reported by boys, some female

respondents claimed to have the extreme experience of peer pressure and reported the maximum score as 40. The minimum score for girls is 10 as it is somewhat less than the minimum score reported by boys. Although there has been some degree of peer pressure on both girls and boys, scores that are more evenly distributed among females suggest that different people of the same gender will experience it in different ways.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study brings out the way in which negative and positive peer pressures influence the professional choices of adolescents in the district of Ranchi. Results have been differing among adolescence based on the intensity of the pressure, reflecting and affecting their choice patterns according to gender, socioeconomic status, and residence. Peer pressure is usually more or less on the higher side for boys than for girls, and a clear difference can also be seen between the career preferences by the gender, with boys liking sectors like science and technology and defence more compared with girls who are more interested in the arts and medicine. This study, therefore, calls for focused interventions in the form of career counselling programs. These need to consider socioeconomic differences, gender, and culture. By minimizing the negative effects of peer pressure and encouraging adolescence to explore a broad spectrum of occupations, the study presupposes it to be necessary.

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